Susan Bell – from
her affectionate Friend
and fellow Christian
Mary Hallman –

August – 6 – 1831 –
Phila

THE MEANS

OF A

RELIGIOUS REVIVAL.

BY

JOHN HOWARD HINTON, M. A.

"AWAKE, AWAKE; PUT ON THY STRENGTH, O ZION!"
Isaiah lii. 1.

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

BOSTON:
LINCOLN AND EDMANDS.
1831.

DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS—TO WIT:

District Clerk's Office.

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the 1st day of April A. D. 1831, in the fifty-fifth year of the Independence of the United States of America, LINCOLN & EDMANDS, of the said district, have deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof they claim as proprietors, in the words following, to wit:

'The Means of a Religious Revival. By John Howard Hinton, M. A. 'Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion!' Isaiah lii. 1. With an Introductory Essay.'

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled 'An act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned;' and also to an act, entitled 'An act supplementary to an act, entitled, 'An act for the encouragement of learning by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned;'' and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints.'

JNO. W. DAVIS,

Clerk of the District of Massachusetts.

ADVERTISEMENT.

As the great subject of religious revivals is attracting an increased attention, in the various sections of the United States, the publishers hope to promote the interests of vital piety, by presenting, in a convenient form for circulation, the excellent work of Mr Hinton on the 'Means of a Religious Revival.' It is peculiarly adapted to excite to awakened activity, every individual of the Christian Church. To the work is prefixed An Introductory Essay, written by an American Minister, desirous to aid the interesting object of the publication.

WAITT AND DOW, PRINTERS.

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

THE progress of religion does not, like that of the sciences, depend on the discovery of new principles. God has given to us in his word a *complete* revelation of religion. It is from the sacred oracles, and from them only, that we are to derive all our religious knowledge. And these oracles were as complete at the filling up of the present canon as they now are, or as they will be at any future period.

There is nothing like this in any of the scien ces. There is no system, in which is developed every principle, and to which we are to confine ourselves in every inquiry into the laws of nature, requiring of us simply to multiply our observations of facts to illustrate truths already known.

Every scientific treatise is esteemed valuable—mostly in proportion to what in it is original—to the discoveries it gives to the world of important, ultimate facts.

Not so in religion. There God has given us the principles of which if we are ignorant, it is because we have not searched his word. We would not be misapprehended in this statement, as if we thought there were no field for research, no claim upon the intellect in a revealed religion. Nothing can be farther than this from our views.

But while it is true, if there were no revelation, to which we might resort with confidence, we should be more in the dark upon the subject of religion than we are in the sciences of nature, as sin has introduced a confusion into the moral, which it has not into the natural world—yet with the revelation which has been given us, the certainty of morals stands altogether pre-eminent.

What intellect has to do with the progress of religion is confined, first, to the study of the revealed word. Nor will it find here a field of research either limited or barren. The extent of this revelation, together with the character of its truths, affords an ample task for the stoutest and most untiring mind. While all that is necessary to salvation is simple and plain—so that a child may understand and be made to feel the power of its renovating truths—there is much also that is sublime, much that is incomprehensible.

To relish the one, and to know the exact point at which the human understanding has its limit in the other—requires a mental cultivation and expansion to which we are not prepared to set bounds. And the degree of this cultivation on the part of the friends of God and religion—other things being equal,—might be taken perhaps as the measure of the progress of morals and religion in the world.

Besides this, there are many collateral studies with that of the Bible—such as antiquity, especially that of the Jews, which are now throwing, and probably will continue to throw increasing light upon the sacred text. Many portions of revelation, of which we may now be utterly ignorant, or but imperfectly understand, will yet be made clear, and thus be brought to bear upon the consciences of men. Those, united with what was before understood, will be an accumulation of religious power.

Again: Not only may the researches of the human understanding throw new light upon what God has revealed in his word, but it may, in the next place, advance beyond its present state of ability to select, arrange and combine truth, so as to affect the heart more powerfully than it now does.

In other words, the character of preaching and of religious addresses to the consciences of men, whether in public or private, may be changed for the better, compared with what they now are. There has been a great change within a few years in this respect, and the fruits of ministerial labor show that this change has been favorable to religion. We need not say that this change is greater simplicity, and a style of address more practical in its character.

Nor are we by any means prepared to say, that all has been done, on this subject, that can or will be. If any man would be great in the kingdom of Christ, he must not labor to discover new doctrines which may convert the soul, but he must task his intellect in so combining and illustrating the simple principles which God has already revealed, as to make them bear with new force upon the heart and conscience. Genius must here be seen in making men feel greatly, for not doing what they have known for years they should have done, and for doing, on the other hand, what they have often done without compunction, though they were well aware of God's displeasure against the acts. The great object is, the power to make men feel what the same truths have not yet been able to do, the ability to make all things appear new.

When we say, therefore, 'the sacred oracles' are complete, it is meant that God will neither reveal nor will men discover, unaided, new laws—new doctrines—new motives of conduct—or prospects of the world to come. No new revelation will be found to exist between God and man, whereby the obligations of the latter shall not be included in the well known commandment, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, might, mind and strength. No new relation shall be discovered to exist between men, as fellow men, and fellow pilgrims—where the mutual obligation shall not be the standing one, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyrelf.'

The simple law of gravitation was known as a fact, and to govern the material universe, before any thing like a full developement was made of its relative influence upon the different spheres. Nor is it supposed that future inquiries will not throw new and important light upon the whole subject, though the simple law in any case before us may be perfectly understood as it ever will be.

So the revealed principle binding on man as a rule of life, to love our neighbor as ourselves, may yet be seen to imply, and men may acknowledge their obligations to pursue a very different course of conduct from what is now practised.

The very simple rule which we often see illustrated in the intercourse of two individuals who deal justly, may be hereafter seen to reach us, and extend out, more than it now does, into all the variety of intercourse among communities and nations. New obligations may be discovered and felt, of which the world has little thought.

And as the bare supposition of an increase of light on this subject must also imply an increased willingness to recognize and obey the laws which it shall disclose—(for surely the world will not labor to search out and increase obligations, which it has no disposition to discharge)—we can predict the advance of general righteousness in the world as surely as that of light.

But we have no reason to expect, that there will arise any new prophet or inspired Psalmist or Apostle or preacher of righteouness. Our present Bible, is all the revelation, so far as we know, which God designs to make to this fallen world. With us, then, it is to the law and the testimony, that we are to have recourse. And he is wise who searches them, and them only, thinking to find the words of eternal life.

Again: The Bible is not only a complete revelation, but it is also *sufficient*.

The holy scriptures are not only able to make him wise unto salvation who shall follow the

precepts which they contain, but also, thoroughly to furnish the servants of God, who are laboring to advance his cause among men, unto all good works.

A tradesman may fail in business, because he could not foresee and calculate on the fluctuation of the market. The husbandman may be disappointed, when he enters the field to reap his harvest, because he could not predict the unfruitfulness of the season. The merchant may lose his ship at sea, because the tempest which wrecked it could not have been anticipated and escaped, or the rock on which it dashed had been hitherto undiscovered.

But he that shall have gone from the cradle to the judgment seat of Christ, with a Bible in his hand—will not find a pardon or an extenuation of his sin on the ground of ignorance.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. The proposition that a sufficient revelation has been given us, is only repeating the sentiment of the Apostle, whom we have just quoted, with one, yet by no means an important qualification. The Jewish scriptures which are here declared to be able to make the

man of God perfect, were not then a *complete* revelation.

They, if believed, were sufficient to reclaim the heart to God, to save the soul; but very important revelations were made afterwards. All that is new in what are called the New Testament writings, are an after revelation. They make the sacred oracles complete.

It ought to be distinctly understood, however, that while the revelations of the New Testament are so important, that they are said to bring life and immortality to light—they are, nevertheless, in general, only a fuller development of what had already been suggested. The Psalmist says, 'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.' At the coming of Christ and the opening of the new scheme of revelations, it was said, the 'day-spring from on high hath visited us—to give light to them that sit in darkness.' As the light of a full and unclouded sun rising upon the world is compared to the feeble light of a taper—so is the abundance of Gospel light and knowledge, compared with what was before enjoyed.

This increase of light, however, has as much reference to its universality, to the greater number of persons who walk by it, as to the increased benefit to any one individual. Those devout

men of old who walked with God, seem to have had their light to themselves, shut up, most of it, within their own bosoms. Under the Gospel, the sun that has risen upon us, sheds his beams on all around, while at the same time it makes the path of each individual more luminous and safe.

But the Old Testament, though incomplete, though an unfinished revelation, was nevertheless, sufficient, if received with faith, to make wise unto salvation. 'The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.' This was said as true of the Jewish Scriptures. What, then, ought to be considered to be the value of a complete revelation, where, if there were not one new principle or ultimate fact disclosed, the more perfect development and brilliancy of illustration, of what had been previously known as true, makes the comparison as the sun to a taper. If Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, Isaiah, and Daniel, had sufficient divine knowledge to make them so perfect in personal piety as they were, and so thoroughly furnished to teach men the fear of the Lord—what manner of persons ought we to be, not only in all godly conversation, but also in the ability to persuade men to be reconciled to God.

There is now more religious power in the world—for knowledge is power—than there was before the Gospel revelations were made. And, if we are not holier men than those ancient servants of the Most High were, and if we do not accomplish more in carrying forward the cause of God in the world than they did, we are unfaithful, unprofitable servants. For he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom, having made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth.

We have a *complete* revelation; and if it was sufficient to convert and sanctify the soul before it was completed, much more then is it now. We ought, therefore, not only to make higher attainments in personal piety, but also, to exhibit a greater measure of the spirit and power which characterized Elijah's ministry.

Finally: The renovation of the heart does not depend so much on the amount of knowledge, as on the state of mind at the time of its reception.

Since truth is the great instrument which God has appointed to renew and sanctify the heart;

and as it has been stated, since no farther revelations are to be expected, the sacred oracles being already complete; it may be asked, Why are no more converted and saved? And why are not those who are renewed, more perfect, more thoroughly sanctified? Why are not christians holier men and women?

The difficulty is by no means in the small amount, or the feebleness of truth, either as to God's laws, or the method of salvation. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. The Gospel is emphatically styled the wisdom and the power of God unto salvation.

We not only have this declaration of the Scriptures in their own favor, but we also have facts before us for illustration. We have repeated instances of conversion on hearing the Gospel preached for the first time. The case of Dionysius, a judge of the court of Areopagus, at Athens, is pertinent; and he heard but one discourse, upon the falsehood and folly of idolatry, and he believed. The jailor seems to have been converted under the influence of what truth he received, while standing, for aught we know, with his sword yet unsheathed, which he had drawn with the design of committing suicide; and he asked, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus

Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' And they spake unto him the word of the Lord ; and he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized.

There are repeated instances in heathen lands, where the labors of our missionaries have been crowned with sudden success. Where, without regard to age, a very little knowledge of the way of salvation, has induced the mind to seek it; and a very little knowledge of the will of God, has subdued the mind to obedience. Now compare this with what we often see. Individuals, from their childhood till old age, sit under Gospel light as intense as an unclouded noonday sun, without any saving effect; perhaps are less susceptible of a religious impression, are more sceptical, at the age of fifty, than they were at twenty-five.

This want of saving effect cannot be attributed to the want of divine knowledge, or to the feebleness of truth, any more than a starving man could justly complain that food did not nourish him, of which he refused to partake, though his table was loaded ever so bountifully. 'The word preached does not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that hear it.'

Paul says to Timothy, speaking of the Holy Scriptures, that they are able to make wise unto

salvation, *through faith that is in Christ Jesus.* We see, then, that whether complete or not, a sufficient revelation has been given us, if the mind only be disposed to receive it. Salvation —in a word, all that redeeming and purifying influence which divine truth exerts, depends on faith. But here one may say, the strength of faith must depend on the amount of evidence. If the world have not believed, it must be because God has not yet given them the reasons. Such, it will be readily acknowledged, is the law of the human mind on all other subjects; the more evidence, the stronger the conviction produced on any given mind. But not so in religion. Belief requires evidence. But the state of the mind may be such as to disregard all evidence. It is indeed the fool that hath said in his heart, 'there is no God.' But it does not mean the man who has not the natural power of discernment; but one whose moral feelings have blinded the eyes of his understanding, and his folly is seen perhaps in nothing but the fact, that he believes not.

There are, on the other hand, men of very small capacities, who have not an intellectual grasp sufficient to comprehend any considerable portion of the evidences which God has given to the world, of his existence, attributes, govern-

ment, &c.; but yet, who have such strong confidence in him; have such a perception of spiritual things, that no bribe, no temptation, perhaps not death itself, could bend their integrity, or wrest from them the hope of an eternal weight of glory in another world.

Truth purifies the heart, only in connexion with faith; and faith does not depend so much on the amount of evidence as on the disposition of the heart. It is in the power of any man to resist the counsel of God against himself, in the same way that he may starve himself to death, with his table loaded with the richest viands.

The strength of our faith will depend on the strength of our love for the things revealed as the object of our belief. A mathematical demonstration may produce equal or nearly equal conviction upon any two minds; but of the very same individuals, one may reject all evidence of a God, or be blind to every spiritual doctrine of his word, while the other with a hundredth part of the evidence, may believe to the saving of his soul. The conscience of one is shielded, and from it, the arrow rebounds, and falls powerless. The other is naked and open, and the arrow reaches and penetrates, and fastens, and converts.

An individual of small understanding may, by yielding to the force of what divine knowledge he has, have in the soul so much that is heavenly, as to enable him, like the philosopher in the use of general principle, to infer much as to what heaven is. Of two men, of two christians, the less intellectual may have views of heaven altogether more discriminating and controlling in their influence than the other, of a stronger mind, but more worldly, in whose heart has been shed abroad, less divine love.

How strikingly manifest, then, must this be in those cases where the heart is yet enmity against God, not subject to his law. All who consider this subject with candor, must be convinced that the reason why the truths of God's word have not savingly affected their hearts, (if in fact they have not,) is not owing to any deficiency in the revelation, as being incomplete, or insufficient; but to a spirit of religious unbelief.

I can but imagine with what peculiar emotions and with what solicitude those holy men of old, who rejoiced in the divine light which shone upon their path, and who died believing the promises,—if they are allowed to take cognizance of what mortals do—must watch our progress here on earth, astonished, not only at

the entire disbelief of many, but even at the feebleness of their faith, who do believe, and are striving to enter in at the strait gate. Could their voices but reach us, we should hear them saying, Brethren, believe in the promises.

With less knowledge, they have triumphed over sin and ignorance, and have entered their rest. With less evidence than we have, they have exercised faith, which enabled them to live as strangers and pilgrims in the earth; they endured, supported by the power of faith, the trial of cruel mocking and scourgings; yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonments; they wandered in deserts and in mountains, and in dens, and caves of the earth.

How must that crowd of witnesses, look down upon christians of the present day. How wonderful to them our little attainments in piety, and faith, and sanctification; and above all, how astonishing to them that any should live unaffected, amid so much that is convincing, having no hope, and without God in the world, though he is not very far from every one of them.

O how can a modern infidel stand before this holy army of martyrs, in the day of judgment. How can those who love darkness rather than light, because their own deeds are evil, denying the doctrines of God's word, crying peace, when God hath not pronounced it, stand before them.

How can they who remove the scandal of the cross, 'denying the Lord that bought them,' appear before those who believed in a Saviour to come; and having obtained a good report, through faith, are now worshippers of the full glory of the Lamb.

O what confusion must be theirs, who, almost persuaded to be christians, have nevertheless failed of the grace of God; meeting at the judgment seat of Christ, those, as they must, who have been sanctified, and have been made victorious over sin and death, through the power of the same truths, which to themselves have been a savor of death.

In review—if the Scriptures are a complete revelation, with what diligence ought we to search them, as 'the oracles of God,' containing the words of eternal life.

If God has given us a sufficient revelation, with what gratitude ought we to receive it.

If more is depending on the state of the heart, on the submissive disposition of mind, than on the amount of knowledge, with what a prayerful and childlike spirit should we study God's word, assured, that if any man will do his will, he shall know of his doctrine.

It is with this view of the state of religion and of the means which the Almighty has given his

friends for carrying forward his cause among men that we have been induced to offer to the public, this little work on Religious Revival. It is not recommended as containing any new principles, either doctrines or rules of life. But whoever shall read it with a devout, prayerful heart, seeking simply a more willing mind to labor for God in the Gospel of his Son, will find truth clearly stated, duty forcibly illustrated and urged, and the whole accompanied with a pious spirit, an unction from the Holy One, which wins the soul to a life of active piety.

It shall be followed by our sincere and fervent prayers, that the Divine Spirit, without whose aid all is in vain, may make it a silent, but awakening and powerful preacher to hundreds and thousands of the members of our churches who need a deeper consciousness of the worth of the soul, and of the imminent danger of the impenitent, and whose zeal needs to be called into vigorous action, in order to make them extensively useful in the cause of our blessed Redeemer.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

OBSERVING the annunciation that Wednesday, the 10th of December, would be set apart by the Baptist churches in London as a day of extraordinary prayer, the congregation meeting in Hosiers' Street, Reading, immediately adopted a similar resolution. The attendance was numerous, the spirit fervent, and the season solemn. The sermon now presented to the public was preached by the author to his own people on the morning of the Lord's day following, in order to promote a spirit of exertion conformable with the attitude of prayer. It is primarily to them that he still addresses it from the press; and if he commits it to a more extensive circulation, it is neither because he conceives himself to be particularly entitled to the attention of his brethren, nor because he has anything new or extraordinary to communicate; but because he rejoices to perceive a growing excitement in reference to the progress of religion, and would be happy to aid in giving it a right direction.

In attempting to do so, he has urged the adoption of a habit of personal and individual effort, among the disciples of Christ, for the conversion of the ungodly. It may perhaps occasion surprise, that he should have thought it necessary to dwell on such a topic, in a day which claims to be regarded as pre-eminently characterized by christian exertion. The writer is not wholly ignorant of the kind or the degree of activity which prevails in the religious world, in which, indeed he has borne some humble part, and to which he wishes to do ample justice; but his deliberate opinion is, that, while, in the kind of activity which exists, the degree is far from being just matter of complacency, there is a large sphere of obligatory effort criminally and almost totally neglected. He is ready to allow whatever can be justly said of the pecuniary liberality of the present period; he acknowledges the zeal which is shown for the maintenance and extension of an official ministry; and, with still greater pleasure, does he contemplate the incipient labors of those who go "into the streets and lanes of the city:" but, to say nothing of the very partial and inadequate execution of these sacred duties and blessed enterprises, *what are the proffesors of religion doing individually to save sinners?* Let any man, in a spirit of the most fervent charity, make the

inquiry respecting those whom he personally knows, and with whose general habits he is well acquainted; in what method or to what extent, do these persons appear to try to rescue a soul from death? The answer to this question could scarcely be far from the truth, since efforts of such a character are not easily concealed: but, inasmuch as they may be so in part, let every professor make the scrutiny perfectly accurate, by carrying it into his own bosom, and seriously asking, What have I ever done, or what am I in the habit of doing, for the conversion of ungodly men? The writer has a stong conviction that, in comparison with its resources, almost nothing is done in this direction, through the whole church of Christ. Amidst all the activity of the age, the direct means of conversion are for the most part resigned to professional hands, and the care of men's souls almost as completely left to the ministers of the gospel, as that of their bodies to the physician. With even the awakened anxiety of the present moment respecting the progress of religion, there is associated to a great extent the mistaken and injurious sentiment, that the only thing wanting is a divine blessing, and that the only means to be used is prayer; or that, if any persons are to be more laborious, it is only the ministers. The Lord help his ministers to be more laborious! We

have all need to be quickened in our work, and no faithful minister wishes to shrink from it. But this cherished feeling of exemption on the part of christians at large is a great evil; it is one of the greatest evils of the present age. It lies like a mountain on the bosom of the church of Christ, and it oppresses the heart which would otherwise heave with far mightier throes for the salvation of the world. It stifles her voice; it paralyzes her hands; it induces a sluggishness of the general circulation, and with it a morbid want of sensibility, which renders it impossible to elicit even the existing signs of life, except by a system of excessive and unhealthy stimulants. Nor can any rational hope be entertained of what seems to be so ardently longed for, namely, a revival of religion, until this vast slumbering body is aroused to throw off its *incubus*, and bend its whole energies to the effort.

To the exhibition and the remedy of this evil the author of the following discourse has directed his attention. As was his duty, he has first addressed himself to the people of his immediate charge; but if there be truth or value in the sentiments he has expressed, he earnestly commends them to the consideration of his remoter brethren. What exceptions may be justly claimed to the opinion he has formed, he does not know; but,

while he fears they are few, he is sure that those who are truly most devoted will not be the most eager to except themselves, or the most difficult of access to the influence of stimulant appeals. If there are some who could not say that they have ever strenuously tried to turn one sinner to God, what multitudes more must confess that they have suffered many to pass from their influence, at whose conversion they ought to have aimed; that they have neglected innumerable opportunities in which such an object might have been hopefully pursued; and surrendered many an hour to indolence, to luxury, or to folly, which a deeper tone of piety would have consecrated to this nobler end!

It may seem difficult to reconcile a state of inaction in a direction so obviously pointed out by divine truth, and so strongly congenial with devout feeling, with a lively state of experimental religion. The author is not disposed, however, to come to a very painful conclusion on this point. He conceives rather that this part of their duty has been overlooked, while the attention of christians has been absorbed in their own edification. It cannot for a moment be supposed that the writer holds spiritual consolation and improvement in low estimation, or would insinuate that any person can be too earn-

est in the pursuit of them. But attention to an object, though not excessive in itself, may be so in comparison. It may be disproportionate; it may unawares lead us to forget another, which has equal, or at all events decisive claims on our regard. This the writer conceives to have happened with christian edification. Professors have desired this not too fervently, but too exclusively; and while bent on satiating their own souls, they have not been alive to the relief of the hungry and the perishing. Hence it is that you may find devout persons, who make no more direct effort to convert a sinner than if there were not such a being in the world. Hence it is, too, that the state of church union loses in a great measure its appropriate character of activity; and while it is valued as a pavilion into which the righteous may enter to pour out their sorrows, and find refuge from their trials, it ceases to resemble a fortress, from which the soldiers of the cross are continually issuing, to assail the kingdom of darkness, and rescue the captives of Satan. Hence, finally, it arises, that even the ministry of the divine word has undergone a most injurious modification. The pastoral character in great part absorbs the ministerial, and the edification of the church takes precedence of the conversion of the world. In this manner the preaching of the gos-

pel loses its primary and most important aspect, to assume almost exclusively a secondary and less important one; and its main address is no longer to sinners, but to saints. The consummation of this process is, that ministers, being in the habit of speaking chiefly to the righteous, have few sinners to address; and at length, in some cases, come to the strange conclusion that they have nothing to say to the wicked if they were there. This corruption of the gospel is a most afflictive one; and one for the origination and continuance of which the churches of Christ have to accuse chiefly themselves. The author would rejoice to promote an increasing readiness in christians, not only to endure, but to welcome a large measure of address to the unconverted. He cannot but think, that, if they felt a due pity for their condition, and were accustomed themselves to strive for their conversion, they would delight in such appeals, and be scarcely less happy to sit and pray for others, than to be comforted themselves.

The author is well aware, that the habit of public exertion which the last thirty years has introduced, is conceived to have been unfavorable to the cultivation of personal piety, and to have imparted to it, as known in the present day, a superficial character much to be regretted. What-

ever justice there may be in this remark, it is obvious that the efforts he enforces cannot have a similar tendency. The evil has arisen from deserting private for public activity. To attend committees, to frequent public meetings, to undertake collections, to write reports, to make speeches, are things, which, however necessary, useful or agreeable, tend not to feed, but to exhaust piety; and a man had need be of more than an ordinary standard, and maintain an unusual nearness to God, to sustain such a life without injury; while, in too many instances, these exertions have been suffered to abridge those devout retirements, in which the essential nourishment of religion is chiefly derived. The effect of personal effort to convert men will be altogether different. It takes no man far abroad. It begins at home, with his children and his servants. It accompanies him wherever he goes, and leads him precisely where he would go, if he had no such object. Or, if it occasionally conducts him elsewhere, it is not to scenes of even religious dissipation, but to individual converse; it is to behold depravity and guilt, not in picturesque description, but in embodied misery; and to aim at the conversion of a soul, not by loud plaudits of an orator, but by the compassionate pleadings of his own lips; not by the opening of a liberal purse,

but by the more influential utterance of a melting heart. This is work to do a man's soul good, to teach him what it is to be a christian, and what a christian ought to be; to make him feel the value and the need of sterling principles of piety; and to send him to his knees, both with more fervent supplication and more ardent praise.

But the writer must check himself in a course of remark, by which he is, perhaps, too long detaining his readers from the main subject of the discourse. What joy would it not afford him, if each would peruse it with a spirit of serious examination and fervent prayer; and, without once thinking either of the sermon or the author, yield his whole soul to conviction, penitence, and reformation!

MEANS

OF

RELIGIOUS REVIVAL.

Matthew v. 13.

"YE ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH: BUT IF THE SALT HAVE LOST HIS SAVOUR, WHEREWITH SHALL IT BE SALTED? IT IS THENCEFORTH GOOD FOR NOTHING, BUT TO BE CAST OUT, AND TRODDEN UNDER FOOT OF MEN."

Our attention has lately been directed to the very serious and affecting fact, that the progress of religion, at the present period, is by no means rapid; far less so than must be desired, and might be expected. On this account we have engaged in an exercise of extraordinary prayer; an occasion on which your attendance was gratifying, and on which we are assured that the God of Zion accepted graciously whatever of real prayer was presented at his footstool. Ever since that day, however, I have seemed to have ringing in my ears the words of the Lord to one of his ancient servants, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" Was it then wrong to pray? No: but

it will be wrong to content ourselves with prayer. The question addressed to the prophet was designed to turn him from his lamentation over the idolatrous state of the Jewish nation, to his duty as its destined reformer; and we need equally to be directed from our supplications to our labors. We have presented our petitions at the throne of grace, for the conversion of the world. Here is the answer to them: "YE ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH." As though the Lord had said, "The conversion of the world lies not only with me; it lies in part with yourselves. If it is mine to pour out a blessing, it is yours to employ the means upon which alone a blessing can rest. Depart, therefore, to your labor; and see that you are as faithful to your obligations, as you have implored me to be to my promises." Such ought to have been our spirit and our purpose while waiting at his throne; and if indeed it were not, we could expect little else than to be driven from his presence, with the indignant rebuke, "Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Bring no more vain oblations; the calling of assemblies I cannot away with.'

I am constrained, therefore, by a solemn sense of duty, and a deep feeling of its importance, to dwell upon this subject to day, and to urge,

with affectionate importunity, our obligation to instant activity. And though, in an effort which may encounter established habits of thought and feeling as well as of action, if I may not rather say of inaction and self-indulgence, I might be apprehensive of little success, the time, the circumstances, the remembrance of your prayers, together with the awakened interest and increased excitement of your minds, encourage a hope that it will not be in vain. At all events it is my duty to make the attempt: may God crown it with his blessing!

The passage before us divides itself into two portions. It contains, first, a general view of the relation which the disciples of Christ sustain to the world: and, secondly, a representation of the importance of fully maintaining the character assigned to us: "YE ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH. BUT IF THE SALT HAS LOST ITS SAVOUR, WHEREWITH SHALL IT BE SALTED? IT IS THENCEFORTH GOOD FOR NOTHING, BUT TO BE CAST OUT, AND TRODDEN UNDER FOOT OF MEN."

I. Our Lord here presents to us, in the first place, a general view of the relation which his disciples sustain to the world. They are THE SALT OF THE EARTH.

Of course this is figurative language. By the

earth is doubtless intended the general mass of mankind. And when Christ speaks of the *salt* of the earth, he clearly intimates that mankind generally are in a state susceptible of, and, in truth, imperatively requiring, a beneficial change; as some substances, under the action of salt, receive an additional flavor, or are even preserved from decay. The assertion that his *disciples* are the salt of the earth, carries with it the idea of their fitness and destination to produce the contemplated effect. Let us mark the sentiments which the passage, thus interpreted, is adapted to convey.

1. It teaches us, in the first place, that mankind generally are in need of a beneficial change. The change to which the text refers is obviously a religious one; and the implication of it is, that the great bulk of mankind are in an irreligious state. That this was the case at the time our Lord spoke, is sufficiently manifest, without particular proof; and, when we think of the wide tracts and multiplied nations yet scarcely, or not at all, enlightened by the gospel, it can admit of no doubt that it is so still. But can such a representation be truly made of human society, within the more favored limits of religious light and christian profession? Is the bulk of protestant countries, or of our own coun-

try, ungodly? Are the majority of our neighbors living without God in the world? Are the irreligious to be found in the circles of our acquaintance, and in the bosom of our families? To answer these questions, it is needful to determine on what principle the answer shall be given. The grand inquiry is this: Is religion a matter of name and form, of relation and profession? Or is it personal, internal, and spiritual? If the former, then indeed may we look round upon the swarming population of our country with a complacent and delighted eye: but if the latter, as we most solemnly believe to be the case, its aspect assumes a very different and a melancholy hue. "Except a man be born again," said our divine Instructor, "he cannot see the kingdom of God."* "If any man be in Christ,' says an inspired apostle, 'he is a new creature. Old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."† "Be not deceived: God is not mocked. For what a man soweth that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap perdition; but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting."‡ Judging by this rule, it must be admitted, with whatever pain, that the irreligious are to be found among us in numbers of

*John iii. 3 †2 Cor. v. 17. ‡Gal. vi. 1, 8.

a most afflictive amount. It is not the many who are characterized by piety and purity, by love to God and delight in his service, by self-denial and consecration to his glory. These, alas! are the few. Persons of a different character, under a thousand varied aspects, indeed more or less amiable or unamiable, but all destitute of pure and undefiled religion, are everywhere discernible, both in the social and the domestic circle. Happy is the family in which every inmate is a friend of God; and that is yet more happy in which the same can be said of every relative. What circle in a neighborhood could you describe, that should comprehend even a very few persons and not enclose an ungodly one? How often might you explore a similar compass, without discovering a christian indeed! In what thoroughfare could you stand, and receive a candid answer from every passenger, without perceiving that the mass of society is yet far from God? At what point of general concourse could you attend, and observe the display of character elicited there, without a deep and melancholy conviction that the world still lieth in wickedness? Along what street, or through what hamlet, could you go, and take the most charitable glance into every dwelling, without ascertaining them to be, in a deplorable number of instances, habitations

of ignorance, if not of vice? During what day can you conduct your ordinary concerns, without feeling yourselves brought into contact with many who have not the fear of God before their eyes? O! it is too true, that the mass of human society, in the most favored circumstances, needs to have added to it a flavor of godliness. Religion, real religion, is yet to be imparted, ere we can be truly called a christian people; ere the stain of sin can be effaced, or its everlasting and calamitous consequences prevented.

2. Our Lord's declaration that his disciples are the salt of the earth, teaches us, in the second place, that they possess a fitness to produce this most desirable and important change; as salt is adapted to prevent the decay and improve the flavor of the substances to which it may be suitably applied. The truth of this representation will readily appear.

The first thing necessary to the conversion of a sinner is instruction; and every disciple of Christ, without excepting even the least informed is in possession of sufficient knowledge for this purpose. He may know little; but if he has been taught of God (and if he has not, he is no disciple,) he knows well and clearly, both his guilt and his misery; together with the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, in its suitableness, its excellency and its all-sufficiency. If he knows this, he can

teach it; and if this is all he knows, as it is enough for his own salvation, so it is enough for the conversion of his neighbor. For Christ is "the wisdom of God, and the power of God;* and to know him is to become wise unto salvation.

It is next important to the conversion of a sinner, that he should be addressed neither with harshness, nor with coldness; but in a tone of deep feeling as to the general importance of salvation, and of fervent kindness in reference to his particular welfare. Such a mode of address is obviously most adapted to conciliate his regard, and to penetrate his heart. And this is just the tone which the disciple of Christ is prepared to employ. Having been in a similar condition of wretchedness and ruin, he is is qualified to feel tender compassion for that of his fellow man; nor, even in endeavoring to convince of sin, can he well be harsh with the faults of another, since he has experienced a gracious forgiveness of his own. If he speaks, it may truly be expected to be with pity in his heart; and with a thrilling solemnity about the salvation of a soul, which, in his own case, has been wonderfully rescued from everlasting burnings.

To this substantial fitness for attempting the conversion of sinners, may be added the incidental facilities arising from the circumstances and relations of life. The disciples of Christ, though

* 1 Cor. i. 24.

separated from the world in their character and pursuits, are not so in their condition. Not *of* the world, they are still *in* it. They continue to sustain its various relations, and to possess the kindly and important influences which arise from them. In conversing on the concerns of religion, instead of speaking as a stranger, it will be in one case, as a neighbor or an acquaintance; in another, as a friend; in another, as a relative, a brother or a sister, a parent or a child. All these circumstances give us facilities for speaking, they teach us how to speak, and they open many delightful avenues to the heart. Such intercourse has a great superiority over every other kind of address. How often may it be renewed! What advantage may be taken of occurrences perpetually varying! How easily may instruction be mingled with the kind offices of friendship, or be insinuated amidst the expressions of conjugal, fraternal, or parental love!

To crown all, the disciples of Christ are fitted to be the salt of the earth by the very force of piety itself. Religion gives a visible peculiarity to the character; it makes men different from what they were, and from what others are. And the character thus formed is an instructive one. It presents an aspect of happiness, loveliness, and excellence. It is a practical confirmation of that which has been poured from the lips, and appeals

powerfully to the heart of the observer. "This man has been telling me," he may say within himself, "that I am unholy, and indeed his conduct puts me to shame. He has assured me that there is a happiness greater than any I have yet found; and I must believe it, for I see it in his countenance. He tells me that religion raises the character, and in truth I see a great change in him. It must be as he affirms." Thus a holy life has a voice. In more convincing tones it echoes the instructions of the lips which have already been as a fountain of wisdom. Its eloquence never ceases. It speaks when the tongue is silent; and is either a constant attraction or a perpetual reproof. It speaks on all subjects, and shows the nature and excellency of religion, both in duty and in trial, both in sorrows and in joys.

3. While it is thus manifest that the disciples of Christ are instruments admirably fitted for the conversion of men, the text leads us to observe, in the third place, that the accomplishment of this end requires a specific effort. Salt is adapted to impart a flavor; but it will not do so unless it is applied. It might be thought, perhaps, that the simple locality of true christians, dispersed as they are through society in all its parts, would correspond sufficiently with the metaphorical import of the text in this particular; and it is true that, in consequence of this locality, with-

out any specific effort, their example will shine, and may be expected to produce a measure of advantage. But it is obvious that the fitness for the conversion of sinners possessed by the disciples of Christ, is not fully brought into action by this means. The influence of example, on the contrary, is only a part, and a very small part, of that which it is in their power to employ. It tends rather to confirm instruction which has been given, than in the first instance to convey it; nor can it have its full and proper efficacy, except as an illustration and seal of what the lips have uttered, and the ear has heard. The knowledge of divine things possessed by a christian indeed, cannot be made truly conducive to another's good without express communication; nor can the impressive seriousness and tender compassion which he feels, find any such access to the heart as by the tones of the voice. Superadded to these, the influence of a holy conduct will be great and decisive; while without them it might rather impart an air of inconsistency to the general character. Must it not be deemed strange, that, if a man's life pleads for God, his lips should not plead too? And would not the consciousness that a christian was studiously framing his conduct so as to exhibit the importance and excellency of religion, while he was yet silent on the subject, lead an ungodly man to say, "I am

surprised he does not speak to me about it?" If the salt is to impart its saltness, it must be fully and directly applied: and if the disciples of Christ impart the benefits which they are fitted to convey, it can be only by bringing the whole of their character and aptitude into bearing. The tongue must be employed to communicate instruction, as well as the conduct to confirm it; and this too in all the circumstances of life, and on all the opportunities which its varied intercourse may afford. To fail of this is to abandon the grand instrument of our usefulness, and to leave the irreligious to their wretchedness and their ruin.

4. The declaration of our Lord indicates, fourthly, that his disciples are the appointed instruments for the conversion of the world. "Ye are THE SALT OF THE EARTH:" not only of the nature of salt to a savourless or putrifying mass; but THE SALT, by which specifically the mass is to be flavored and preserved.

It cannot be intimated by this passage that the conversion of a sinner is a work, as to its actual accomplishment, within the compass of human power. Though it be only to instruct, to convince, and to persuade; though the motives are of immense power, and though the disciples of Christ do possess an eminent adaptation to it: yet it is foretold to us, by Him who knows the secrets of all hearts, that the actual conversion of

a sinner demands another and a superior agency "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord." * He works in those who believe with "the exceeding greatness of that power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead." † The influence which can change the heart is exclusively his own; and however well adapted the means may be, or however zealously employed, without his blessing there will be no success. Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but "God giveth the increase." ‡ The agency allotted to his people is clearly subordinate; and I trust that nothing I may say will be interpreted into a confounding of the work of the saints *for* conversion, with the work of God the Holy Spirit *in* it. His is the efficient agency, theirs the instrumental. Keeping up a clear distinction between these two, that which we have now to observe, is, that an instrumental agency in the conversion of the world is truly appointed to the saints. THEY are *the salt of the earth.*

Such a destination might be not obscurely inferred from the very fact that a character adapted to this end is formed in them. For there is in all the works of God, combined with boundless fulness, a strict economy of resources. Nothing is wanting, neither is anything wasted.

* Zech. iv. 6. † Eph. i. 19, 20. ‡ 1 Cor. iii. 6.

With endless abundance there is no prodigality. Whatever the properties of anything may be, they are brought into action and use. If he has made great lights, it is to rule the day, and to cheer the night. If he gives to the thirsty atmosphere supplies of moisture from the teeming earth, or permits it to drink ampler draughts from the swelling ocean, it is that the watery treasures of the sky may descend in blessings on the fruitful ground. It is necessary to his wisdom that it should be so: for "neither do *men* light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house."* Now the works of nature are the pattern of the works of grace. If he suffers no beam of natural light to be kindled without an object, much less the brighter beams of light divine. If he has made us, who were once darkness, to be light in the Lord, it is that we may shine as lights in a dark place. Or, to return to the metaphor in our text, if he has made us as salt to a corrupt world, it is that we should be *the salt* of the earth, and diffuse on every hand the savour we have received. Were it not so, it would be production without design; the creation of an instrument without an object to be attained by it; an instance, in a word,

* Matt. v. 15.

and in Him an incredible instance, of prodigality and wastefulness.

We are not left, however, to this inference alone. God has instructed us in the nature of his design, by express directions as to our duty. Our text itself has the force of an injunction, that the salt should not lose its savour. And almost immediately afterwards it is added, "*Let* your light *so* shine before men, that they seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven."* It was to his disciples at large, that Christ said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."† He addresses the exhortation no less to every convert, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee."‡ To this we may add the words of the apostle, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them;"§ "among whom shine ye, as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life."‖

In accordance with the design which these injunctions discover, is the station of prominence and publicity in which Christ has placed his disciples. He has not suffered them to be either hidden or disguised. There is something in re-

*Matt. v. 16. †Mark xvi. 15. ‡Mark v. 19.
§Eph. v. 11. ‖Phil. ii. 15, 16.

ligion, indeed, which tends to make itself known, and will not suffer a christian to be altogether concealed. But in addition to this our Lord has required from all his followers, an avowal of their attachment to him, and a public dedication of themselves to his service. It is demanded of them to witness a good confession, in the face often of a wondering, and sometimes of a scoffing world. They thus acquire an inevitable publicity. They are as a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid. Their prominence, like the elevation of a candle on a candlestick, is intended to enlarge the sphere of their influence; to make their light spread through a larger area, and reach a wider circumference. It adds nothing to their comfort; it rather increases their responsibility, and with it their cares, their difficulties, and their dangers; and it shows, therefore, the more strongly, that it is God's design, in the conversion of one sinner, to make him instrumental in the conversion of others.

The measures which he has actually pursued in reference to the prevalence of religion, exactly correspond with the idea we are enforcing. After the departure of our risen Lord, the faith was "delivered to the saints."* The diffusion of the gospel was left in the hands of the disciples of that age, and it has equally been left in the hands of the disciples of every suc-

*Jude 3.

ceeding age. No instrumental agency for this end has been brought into bearing, but the voluntary efforts of the people of God; nor is an intimation any where given that any other will hereafter be employed. The angels are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation; but no part appears to be allotted to them in the proclamation of the gospel, or in the conversion of sinners. They rejoice in it, indeed, but it is as a work wrought by other hands. Nor are the spirits of the just made perfect called into this field of labor, though it could not but be highly delightful to them, and though they can scarcely be otherwise than, in some respects at least, pre-eminently qualified for it. The whole of this instrumentality is confined to the living disciples of their Lord. Including in our language the whole of this body, it may be affirmed, that nothing will ever be done for the conversion of the world, but what we do for this end. We are the salt of the earth; and if it derives no seasoning from us, it will derive none from any other quarter, but will proceed from its present corruption to its final perdition.

It is not to be imagined that so grievous a state and issue of things will be prevented by an abundant out-pouring of the Spirit; since there is no object to be attained by such an effusion, but to give efficacy to means employed. To a work

which is to be accomplished by means, the use of those means is as necessary as the power which is to give them success. Such a work is the conversion of the world. The earth is to be seasoned *by the saints;* and no farther than their exertions are employed for this end, is there any thing upon which the influence of the Spirit may rest, or to which his gracious efficacy will be imparted.

5. We have yet further to observe, fifthly, that the design of our Lord respecting the beneficial instrumentality of his disciples is universal: or rather, without limitation.

On the one hand, it comprehends the whole number of his followers. When he says "YE are the salt of the earth," he contemplates no particular portion of them, but the body at large. The words occur in a discourse which cannot be alleged to have any special reference to the apostles; nor can they by any means be confined to the multitude then in attendance on his ministry. Nor is there any reason why a limitation should be assigned to them. It is obvious, indeed, that a great diversity in point of knowledge and ability, wealth and influence, exists among christians; but it should be remembered, that these are not the things in which their adaptation to usefulness has been shown to consist. That which fits a follower of Christ to do good is, that he knows the value of a Saviour, that he feels the importance of eter-

nity, and that he can confirm his words by his example. These qualifications will be found to obtain universally, and perhaps most abundantly where least suspected. If there be one found totally deficient in them, let it be admitted that he is not to be reckoned among the salt of the earth; but it will surely be difficult to retain him in the family of God. And if every disciple of Christ, however obscure in his circumstances, or destitute of general information, possesses in fact the essential requisites for the conversion of the world, it needs nothing more to demonstrate that he was intended to co-operate in the work.

On the other hand, as the language of the text carries universality with it when indicating the class of agents to be employed, it has a similar force when it refers to the sphere of their influence. "Ye are the salt of THE EARTH:" not of a portion of the earth merely, but of the whole. It is clear that the efforts of each individual will naturally commence with those in immediate contact with him; nor can it be expected that many will be able to extend their endeavors beyond a small circle of relations and neighbors. Yet it is not difficult to trace the tendency of such operations to the conversion of the world. Each little circle thus formed has a principle of increase, and will extend its limits until it blends

itself with others by which it may be more or less nearly surrounded. These larger circles, again, will augment their circumference continually, both by the essential activity of the extreme points, and by throwing outwards the energy which may be accumulated at the centre, and less urgently required in the area already occupied. Nor can any limit be assigned to this progress until the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord. And this is the scope marked out by Christ for the influence of his followers. "Ye are the salt of THE EARTH;" adequate and destined to the conversion of the world.

6. We observe, finally, that the language of our Lord encourages a confident expectation of success.

Though nothing is expressly said on the subject, the very appointment of the means to the end involves this idea. Consider who it is that speaks. It is not merely that a casual observer has discovered an aptitude in pious persons to induce piety in others; but it is the voice of the Redeemer himself, in the first instance, declaring the adequate adaptation of his followers to the instrumental conversion of the world, and then announcing his design that they should effect it. It is inconceivable that he should have chosen for such a purpose an insufficient agency; or that, having appointed one, he should withhold the

blessing needful to its success. His affirmation that his disciples are the salt of the earth, is equivalent to saying that their attempts for its conversion shall be triumphant. When we know the only means which he will employ for this or any other purpose, we know also that those means will infallibly succeed.

It may be felt, perhaps, that this representation scarcely corresponds with the facts within our observation. Many efforts have been made for the conversion of individuals which have not succeeded. But in how many instances is want of success precipitately inferred? Who can tell, till the day shall declare it, with what happy results our endeavors may have been crowned? And in instances of effort really unsuccessful, how probably may the failure be referred to a want of ardor! How much greater our reward might have been, had we labored as we ought! But, in truth, the language of the text is not of an individual but a general reference; so that the success of individual christians must be distinguished from that of the body, and the conversion of individual sinners from that of the world. An occasional failure in the former case, or final impenitence in the latter, does not invalidate the general truth. In the end, the whole earth will be brought to glorify God, and this blessed result will be achieved by the instrumentality of

the saints. They are the salt of the earth; and by them shall the corrupt mass be seasoned.

Having thus briefly surveyed the relation which the disciples of Christ bear to the world, it is important, before we proceed, to glance at the aspects which it wears.

1. The institution of this relation must be regarded, first, as *an exercise of the Redeemer's* Wisdom. It has not happened accidentally, but has been deliberately arranged; and he has adopted this course, doubtless, not through any constraint or necessity, but because he saw it wisest and best. There is in it a fitness and excellency, which made it seem good in his eyes: it is to be regarded, therefore, with the highest reverence and respect.

But this is not all. Vain as it would be to suppose that we could discern the whole reasons which, in any case, may have determined the only wise God, there are few instances in which we may not discern some of them: nor is it by any means difficult to trace the wisdom of the arrangement, that the conversion of the world should be effected by those who have already been called by his grace.

It is a method which brings into operation existing resources. It is characteristic of wisdom to expend no more on an object than its attainment requires, and to accomplish with instruments al-

ready formed, every thing for which they are properly adapted. On this principle the conduct of our Lord proceeds. He has an end to attain, namely, the conversion of the world. He might easily produce new instruments for accomplishing it; but why should he make such an effort without cause? Has he in his present works any agents adapted to the end? Assuredly he has. Though they are few and feeble, his disciples are so; and he employs them. "YE are the salt of the earth; YE are the light of the world." Here is true and dignified economy, associated with boundless wealth. It is wisdom, turning to the fullest and best account all the resources it commands.

The method he has chosen is, also, pre-eminently suitable, easy, and effectual. Let it be compared with the methods by which the same end has been attempted, according to the wisdom of men. Place it, for example, by the side of endowed establishments for the maintenance and propagation of the gospel, or compare it with the institution of a highly educated order of legalized clergy, irrespective as both these systems must be of any spiritual character. O how much more good has unlettered and individual piety achieved in every age, than all this magnificent and showy apparatus!

You will not suppose me to depreciate for a moment either of those most important and obligatory means of aiding the progress of religion, the stated ministry of the gospel, or missions to the heathen; but place even them in comparison with universal personal endeavor, and the result will be greatly in its favor. Missionaries and ministers are comparatively few, and provided with difficulty; individual effort brings hundreds of thousands of laborers into the field in a moment. The support of ministers and missionaries involves (however unwillingly) a large annual expenditure; but for every christian to labor at home, costs absolutely nothing. Missionaries have to make great sacrifices, to run great risks, and often to fill an early grave; while individual effort involves no hazard, bereaves no parent, afflicts no family. A man sent abroad goes as a stranger, with a thousand impediments to encounter; in seeking to convert our neighbors and our friends, our way is open, our countenances are known, our language is understood, our influence is felt, our intention is appreciated. Private christians have many advantages over ministers of the gospel, even in the most favored circumstances. The one speak in virtue of their office, and often under a degree of suspicion as to their sincerity; the other can speak from no motive but unfeigned love. The one can address their hearers but

occasionally; the other may do it frequently, and follow up their instructions by almost incessant watchfulness and admonition. The one speak as comparative strangers; the other may employ the more touching eloquence of social kindness, of ardent friendship, and perhaps of fraternal or paternal love. The one can speak only to those who choose to attend on their ministry; the other are scattered through society in all its paths, and can carry instruction and reproof to the heedless and the abandoned. Had there been nothing instituted, therefore, but the public preaching of the gospel, whether at home or abroad, the easiest, most extensive, and most effectual means of converting the world would have been overlooked. Superficial observers might have conceived that little result could have been expected, from even a multitude of such feeble efforts as those of individual christians in the same way as one might at first exclaim, Who would think of setting bounds to the sea by a sand bank: but He who knew that grains of sand form the only effectual barrier to the raging waters, discerned too that grains of salt would best season the corrupted world. He has, indeed, done well in instituting a public ministry; but the consummateness of his wisdom lies in evoking the individual energy of his people. "YE are the salt of the earth; YE are the light of the world."

2. In the second place, the language of our divine Lord must be regarded as *an expression of his* WILL. It clearly marks out the line of conduct which he would have his disciples pursue, and is fully equivalent to a command.

"*Ye are the salt of the earth.*" It is as though he had said, "By my grace I have fitted you, and in my good pleasure I have appointed you, to be the instruments of converting the world. BE YE *the salt of the earth.* Every where let your influence be felt, and your capabilities be exerted." The text necessarily assumes this aspect, because the result anticipated implies and requires the voluntary effort of the followers of Christ. The corrupt earth will not be seasoned by the mere fact of Christians being scattered through it, without their endeavors to instruct, to convince and to persuade. The Lord's declaration, therefore, must be our directory. Let us charge it upon ourselves solemnly, if we are his disciples indeed, that it be with us an object of real and practical endeavor to do every thing that can be done for the conversion of sinners. We are not called upon merely to cherish a desire, however fervent, that sinners may be converted, or even to pray, with whatever enlargement, for this blessing; neither are we to content ourselves with remote and indirect efforts for this end, such as supporting the ministry of the gospel, or promoting missions

to the heathen: that which is demanded is our *personal labor.* We are individually summoned to use the direct means of conversion; to be the salt of the earth.

The means of conversion are of great variety. Among them undoubtedly may be reckoned endeavors to circulate the holy scriptures, and to put into the hands of every man the volume which is able to make him wise unto salvation. But this is not all, nor even chief. The intention of Christ, as expressed in this passage, plainly is, that the actual character of his disciples should be brought into complete contact with that of ungodly men; for *they* are the *salt* of the earth. The words lead us of necessity, therefore, to the use of such means of conversion as express this character; namely, to conversation of an instructive, convincing, or persuasive tendency; to serious admonition, or even pointed reproof; to affectionate prayer; and the subserviency to this object of all the intercourse of life, as the writing of letters, occasional visits, offices of kindness, and the influence of relationship or domestic association. It is thus, by direct and personal effort, that a disciple of Christ should seek the conversion of sinners.

And this should be the attitude of *every* disciple. None are exempt from the appointment, none are destitute of the qualification. None are without fitness for the work, and none are at lib-

erty to decline it. It may easily be said by some My ability is very small: and without entering into any argument on this point, I only say, that whatever it may be, it is enough, with God's blessing, to convert sinners. Besides, does not Christ know what it is? Is it not such as he has given you? Is it not such as he requires to be employed? Do you presume to say that what he has prepared for beneficial action is unfit for it; or that what he demands for this purpose shall be refused? However small a portion, you still are a portion of the salt of the earth: see that you act as such. The less your talent, the more need of activity. Beware lest your plea of incompetency be but a cloak for your indolence. Do not so much covet the ability of others, as show diligence in the application of your own.

It may with equal ease be said by others, My station is obscure, and my influence small. Granted: but you will also admit, on the other hand, that, however narrow your circle may be, it is nevertheless a circle of some dimensions that you occupy. You do not stand alone upon the earth. You have *some* relatives, acquaintance, and neighbors. And are they all pious? If you were to try earnestly, could you not reach any who are living without God? Behold, then, your duty. Labor for the conversion of these unhappy persons; and wrap yourself no longer in

the delusion, that in this direction Christ can require and expect nothing *from you.*

It may with truth be alleged by a third class that they are excessively busy, and are thrown into situations in life which demand all their time and all their power; they surely may leave the work of converting sinners to more leisure hands. Yes; if you are willing to abandon your hope of salvation, and to give up your interest in Christ: but *not else.* If you are his disciples, you are also the salt of the earth; and not the busiest man in the world is at liberty to relinquish one part of the character, and to imagine that he can retain the other. But the allegation supposed is, in all probability, truth exaggerated into the character of falsehood. You either have, or might have, some leisure in the early morning; and you allot the evening hours to the agreeable relaxation of domestic or social intercourse. Does a feeling of surprise, to say no more, start up in your bosom at the mention of these things? You are upon the verge then of discovering that it is not time you want, but inclination? Be assured that this is the fact; and that, however closely engaged, you ought to find, and may find, if you are disposed, means of specific exertion for the salvation both of your domestic inmates, your acquaintance, and your neighbors; while a similar aim may run through even the busiest of those busy hours,

which, so far from becoming a plea for your total exemption from labor, ought to be regarded as furnishing you with incessant opportunities of promoting this blessed end.

The duty of laboring directly and individually for the conversion of sinners is, in a word, one from which none of the followers of Christ can be excused. He knows the varied talents, and circumstances of all; and comprehends them all in the declaration, "Ye are the salt of the earth."

Further, If endeavors to convert ungodly men should be recognized as a duty by every disciple of Christ, it should also be esteemed a duty of the highest moment. Of our many duties, none are without importance; but in this respect all are not equal. Our first duties are those which relate to our own salvation; and the next are those which relate to the salvation of others. By the immense magnitude of the object, and its direct reference to the glory of God and the highest happiness of our fellow creatures, these take the decided precedence of all duties respecting the temporal interest, either of ourselves or of others. I am very well aware how often the callings of life will allow but a comparatively small portion of time to be applied to it; but the same may be said of the cultivation of personal piety, which is nevertheless our first duty. What we mean by this is, that the attainment of this end should hold the highest place in our desires; that it should be our

chief aim; and that all other affairs should be so arranged as to afford us the amplest possible opportunities of pursuing it. So when we say that endeavors for the conversion of sinners form the second class of our duties, we mean that, next to our own salvation, we should feel more concerned about this than any other object; that it should be actually second among the great aims of life; and that our affairs should be so ordered as to allow us the utmost practicable opportunity of promoting it. We mean that when a christian asks himself, For what great ends do I live? he should be able to say, First for the good of my own soul; next for the conversion of others; and only after this, for the diligent prosecution of my worldly calling, and efforts of temporal benevolence.

No duty, rightly understood, clashes with another. And as it happens with our first duty, that of securing our own salvation, so it is with our second, that of seeking the salvation of others, that an attention to it requires no interference with a due regard to earthly affairs. While we are diligent in business, as, on the one hand, we may be also fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; so, on the other, we may be animated by a deep concern for the spiritual welfare of those around us, and be ready to embrace every opportunity of advancing it, as a matter far more important than any secular advantage. And nothing short

of this is the state of feeling and of action to which our Lord calls us, when he says, "Ye are the salt of the earth."

3. In the third place, the declaration of our blessed Redeemer may be considered as an *exhibition of his* CONDESCENDING GRACE. The conversion of the world is an operation for which he has ample resources, without employing our aid. It might be accomplished by his immediate power alone, without the intervention of any instrumentality; or if any intermediate agency were accepted, it could be a matter of no necessity to engage our own. It is in truth a display of wonderful condescension, that he should choose to employ instruments so feeble and unworthy; to associate with himself in a work so glorious, creatures so mean and insignificant; and to employ for the conversion of his remaining enemies those who, but a little before, were enemies and rebels themselves.

Among the reasons which have induced him to do so, we are authorized to assign a powerful influence to his kindness towards his people. It was not surely that he would lay on them a burden, or encompass them with difficulties; but rather that he wished to enlarge their happiness. He had a work to perform, the execution of which afforded the most exquisite bliss, and the most exalted honor. He was about, not to pro-

duce a world, but to restore one which sin had destroyed; to bring out of moral chaos a new creation of righteousness and joy, in glory far exceeding the wonders and beauties of the first; to open the blind eyes, that the light of the knowledge of his glory might shine into them, in the face of Jesus Christ; to break the stony heart, that he might pour into it the balm of his love; to quicken dead souls, that, like his blessed ones in heaven, they might live unto God; to bring floods of penitence from the flinty rock, that he might pronounce the forgiveness of sins; to purify the corrupt mind, that he might adorn it with celestial graces, and himself dwell therein forever; to open the bosom which had been barred against him, that he might shed abroad consolations in a world of sorrows, and inspire the peace which passeth all understanding; to allure the wretched and ready to perish to a feast of eternal gladness; and to stretch out his mighty arm to snatch the lost from perdition, as brands out of the fire. And being about to do this, he seems to have been unwilling to confine to himself either the honor or the joy. It is as though he had looked for some whom he loved well enough to make them partakers of his blessedness; and he has conferred the privilege upon his saints. "Ye," says he, "shall be the salt of the earth, the light of the world. The

knowledge of my truth shall be spread by your instructions, and the flame of piety kindled from your hearts. The perishing wretches who receive the forgiveness of sins, shall trace the unspeakable benefit to a fellow creature's hand. The obdurate whose heart melts under the influence of my love, shall remember that he heard of it from a brother's or a parent's lips. Thus my disciples shall have the luxury of conveying the richest boon that almighty grace can give; of making the avenues of earthly affection ways of access for everlasting joy; and of becoming, amidst all their poverty, the highest benefactors of their kind. These who are sharers of my heart, shall also be sharers of my joy; and I will put upon them a portion of the honor with which I myself shall be clothed, as the Saviour of the world."

Say, beloved brethren, whether condescending love could have presented to us a greater privilege. We know the luxury of doing good in the communication of temporal benefits; how much more in conveying those which are eternal! It is no ordinary pleasure to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to relieve the wretched, to comfort the mourner; but how much more delightful must it be, to be the instruments of enlightening the ignorant, of humbling the proud, of subduing the obdurate, of re

claiming the profligate, of saving a soul from death, and hiding a multitude of sins? What benefits can we convey, what sorrows can we alleviate, what consolations can we impart, once to be compared with those which respect an eternal world?

And if this consideration is not destitute of power in its general bearing, how touching does it become when applied to the smaller circles of life! If it would afford me joy to convert a stranger, how much more a friend! If it were delightful to induce piety in a neighbor, how much more in a child! In these narrow spheres our warmest affections flow forth. It is among the chief pleasures of our lives to become ample benefactors to them in all that relates to this world; and O! what joy unspeakable, to be permitted to convey to them the all-important blessings of the next!

Nor is the *honor* small which God thus puts upon us. We should deem ourselves honored, if he were to make us the instruments of saving a fellow creature from death: how much more if he will employ us in rescuing one from everlasting burnings! To do good is one of the loveliest characteristics of God himself, and to be the essential fountain of good is one of his chief prerogatives. He allows us a measure of his own felicity and glory, when he permits us

to convey any benefit; but he does so pre-eminently when he confides to us the transfer of spiritual blessings. In this chief of his works such an arrangement associates us with himself, and presents us to the eyes of all as workers together with God.

And as it makes us a link in the chain of second causes through which God transmits the efficacious influence which brings all his designs to pass, so it equally includes us in the train through which the gratitude of those by whom blessings are received will return to him. As all benefits come ultimately from him, so to him, undoubtedly, will be all the glory and praise; yet the gratitude inspired will breathe most fragrantly, as it ascends, upon those who became the instruments of his goodness. It is thus that efforts of temporal benevolence bring upon our heads the blessings of those who are ready to perish, and often fill the heart with a mingled sense of luxury and unworthiness almost overwhelming: but how inexpressibly touching will *their* accents be, who, amidst heartfelt benedictions, shall say, "You, like the Saviour, came to seek and to save the lost; you taught us to know our sinfulness and our misery; you prayed over us when we would not pray for ourselves, and led us by your importunities to his feet, who hath delivered us from the wrath to come!"

II. Such then is the relation which the disciples of Christ sustain to the world. Let us proceed, in the second place, to the representation which the text contains of the importance of maintaining the character assigned to us. "Ye are the salt of the earth: BUT IF THE SALT HAVE LOST HIS SAVOUR, WHEREWITH SHALL IT BE SALTED? IT IS THENCEFORTH GOOD FOR NOTHING, BUT TO BE CAST OUT, AND TRODDEN UNDER FOOT OF MEN."

1. Here it is necessary for us to inquire, what is to be understood by *the salt having lost his savour*, or saltness. This must be conceived to take place, when the character and conduct of a professed disciple of Christ are not adapted to promote the conversion of sinners.

Such a state may arise in two ways. Upon the supposition that a professor does exert himself for this end, his conduct may be so inconsistent, as not merely to fail of adding to the effect of his words, but to diminish, and even to destroy it. Such would be the case, for example, if he were subject to occasional intemperance, or given to an indulgence of appetite; if he were known to deal frauduently, or to take unfair and ungenerous advantages; if he were a man of unbridled passion, or ill-regulated temper; if he were of a wanton tongue, or a heedless retailer of scandal; if he were a man of covetousness, or grinding to

the poor; if he were engrossed in worldly pursuits, or in schemes of aggrandizement: if he were characterized by a prevailing spirit of levity; or if, in short, his conduct were in any obvious degree otherwise than exemplary. In such a case the salt would have lost his savour. Such a person's conduct would have no tendency to convince an observer of the importance or excellency of religion, but the contrary. Even if he were to speak on the subject, with whatever vehemence, he would scarcely fail to induce the reply, "If religion should not do more for me than it has done for you, it will do me little good."

But, in addition to *consistency*, there is a *studied and intentional exemplariness*, which is necessary to the full savouriness of a christian. It is not only that our example should exercise a right influence when it exercises any at all, or that it should be left to produce what effect it may in a consistent walk; but that it should be studiously and constantly framed with a view to its influence. This is the express direction of our Lord in immediate connexion with the text: "Let your light *so* shine before men, *that they may see your good works*, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."* Such expressions of

* Matt. v. 16.

christian temper and character, therefere, as are adapted to be useful to others, should be conspicuous in our conduct as observed by them, and be rendered so for the purpose of doing them good. Our aim should be, notwithstanding the occasional depression arising from the trials of life, by an habitual cheerfulness to show religion to be, what it really is to us, a source of the highest happiness; to do everything so well, so manifestly upon right principles and for a right end, as to evince the perpetual operation of piety; and to avoid everything, even at the expense of personal sacrifices, by which our conduct might be rendered liable to misconstruction, and rendered less striking in its aspect, or less beneficial in its influence. I know that such a method requires as much of deliberate purpose and effort as specific conversation; but it is certain that professors who fail to use their example with this holy wisdom are as salt which has lost its savour.

A similar state is indicated by defectiveness in the direct and individual effort which we have already described. The savouriness of salt is its readiness to impart its flavor to the substance to which it is applied; and, in like manner, the savouriness of a christian is the readiness which he manifests to diffuse the sentiments which animate him: a religious professor, therefore, has lost his

savour, if, under whatever circumstances, he is content to live without actually trying to convert some person; and, in truth, if he does not endeavor to convert every ungodly person to whom he can consistently gain access. It will not serve to free us from this charge that we contribute to a regular ministry, and that we aid missions to the heathen abroad, or the ignorant at home. *We* are, or should be, the salt of the earth. Our duty is that of personal exertion, in all the avenues that are open to us.

The text leads us next to speak of the *evil* of such a state; but before we do so, let us pause, for the purpose of a close and serious examination of ourselves upon this point. *How far have any of us lost our savour?* The question may perhaps be painful at its first aspect; it may bring an immediate conviction that we are guilty. But let us not, therefore, evade it, nor be content with a general acknowledgment of our fault. As it is important that our criminality should not be wholly concealed from us, it is scarcely less so that our perception of it should be accurate and comprehensive. Let us be willing to know our whole error. How otherwise can we expect to be adequately humbled, or to attain an effectual remedy? A desire to hide such an evil, if it could be supposed to exist in any bosom, would indicate a state of mind inexpressibly lamentable. What-

ever our faults are, may God give us an openness of heart to welcome investigation and rebuke, and to implore the quickening influences of his grace!

Our general inquiry is, whether, as professed disciples of Christ, we are duly exerting ourselves for the conversion of sinners. Let me carry it into particulars, and suppose that you, dear hearer, are a husband or a wife, with a partner who knows not the Lord; and let me ask you, not only whether this is a grief to you, nor only whether it awakens you to prayer; but whether you are *doing* any thing to induce conversion. What means, and with how much diligence, have you employed to convey instruction? When, and how often, has the tenderness of conjugal love thrown its softening influence into an expostulation with a heart obdurate in sin? With how much frequency has your affection been shown to dwell intensely on the spiritual and eternal welfare of so dear a friend? With what constancy of endeavor have you so regulated your temper, and every department of your conduct, that it might add the stamp of truth and the power of eloquence to what your lips have uttered?

Or let me suppose you are parents, with children as yet unconverted; and then I ask, not merely what you have *felt* for their salvation, but what you have *done* for it? What efforts have you made to acquaint them with their duty to

God, and to inspire them with love to Christ? With what diligence have you plied the task of imbuing their minds with seriousness, and repressing youthful vanity? With what ardor have you striven to make them feel that your most intense anxiety respects their salvation, and that, if this be not attained, it will be an unutterable affliction to you that they have ever lived? How sedulously has the fondness of parental caresses been directed to lead them to the Saviour? How studiously have you exemplified before their eyes the importance you attach to prayer and the fear of God, and their influence upon the temper and the tongue?

Let me suppose that you are a master, or a mistress, having servants not religious in your house. I ask, then, Have you done anything for their conversion? Have you ever inquired into the state of their minds, or endeavored to ascertain the degree of their knowledge? Have you used means to impress them with a deep sense of the value of their souls, and employed the influence, of your station to induce them to listen to the things that belong to their peace? Have you enjoined and promoted their attendance at the house of God, and inquired into their profiting by it? Have you provided for and encouraged the reading of the scriptures and other instructive books? Have

you allowed time for retirement, and urged its improvement for reflection and prayer? Have you required their presence at your family worship, and made it an instructive and impressive exercise? Has your just authority been used to prohibit vice, and discountenance levity? And have you charged them, not as servants only, but as children, with an affectionate kindness to which your character will give the greater weight, that they serve and fear the Lord?

Let me suppose that, in addition to domestics, you have to do with others; with some, perhaps, in the family, as apprentices, or with others, as laborers, or persons employed by you in business. I ask in this case, whether you have attempted their conversion? What endeavor have you made to convince them of the sin and folly of an ungodly life? When did you urge them to a right employment of the sabbath? What touching proof have you given them that their souls are precious to you, or what have you done to render them precious to themselves?

Or, I may suppose you to be a younger member of a family; a brother, or a sister. Perhaps not any, or if some, not all your brothers and sisters know the Lord; or, you may have the grief of beholding one or both of your parents in ignorance of him. I ask you then, What means

you have used for the conversion of any of these? Have you spoken kindly to a brother, or a sister, about the welfare of the soul? Have you read to them, or prayed with them? What ingenuity have you employed to bring under a parent's notice a subject so interesting to your heart? What effort have you made, at once to avoid a censorious or dictatorial conduct, and yet to show an exemplary and instructive one? What have you done to make them feel that it is the great end of your life to lead them to the Saviour?

Perhaps you hold an inferior, and yet an honorable situation in the domestic sphere. You may be a domestic, either alone, or associated with others. Perhaps the family are strangers to God: and what tendency have any of your efforts had to their conversion? Has the power of example, which may perhaps be your chief instrument there, been carefully employed by you? Have you been so far heedless, so often out of temper, or so quick in answering again, as to cause it to be felt that it is a disagreeable thing to have pious help in the house? Or, have you tried, by showing in your character what religion can do, to make even those understand its excellency to whom you cannot with propriety speak on such a subject? Opportunities of speaking on it, however, must

often arise: have you improved them? Have you, in a word, labored for their conversion more than for anything else in the world, your own salvation excepted? Or, perhaps your companions are ignorant of Christ: what has been your conduct towards them? Have you fallen in with their levity, so as to encourage them in it? Or, have you tried to wean them from it by the cheerfulness of piety? What savor of seriousness has pervaded your conversation? With what fervor and affection have you endeavored to save them?

I may suppose that you occupy a place in a large circle of relations; that you belong to a family widely dispersed, yet in its various branches occasionally meeting; but not, alas! *all* united in everlasting bonds. What have you done to bring these fragments into the blessed union? Have your letters been impregnated with a savor of piety? Have your occasional interviews been seasons of solemn endeavor to engage their hearts for Christ? Have you sought opportunities, or have you embraced such as arose unsought, for alluring their souls to eternal life?

I may suppose, finally, that you have a more extended connexion with society, and with the world. You have a circle of friends, a wider circle of acquaintance, and a circle still wider of

general intercourse. What have you done for the conversion of any of them? Which of your neighbors has heard the gospel from you? When has the confidential intercourse of friendship turned solemnly on your friends' best interests? With what resolution and ingenuity has the course of general conversation been directed to spiritual improvement?

These inquiries are not many, but few; and merely a specimen of those which we should address to ourselves, according to the peculiarities of our condition. I may perhaps have addressed them to some professors of religion who can give none of them a satisfactory answer; who really never think of trying to convert any one. You imagine that you feel for the conversion of sinners, you concur outwardly in praying for them, you support the ministry of the gospel and missions to the heathen; but this is all. The ungodly are, without exception, abandoned by you to the efforts of others. Neither husband nor wife, neither child nor grand-child, neither friend nor neighbor, do you endeavor to instruct or to save. O salt of the earth! if it be thus with you, you have lost your savor.

Doubtless many of you are not subject to so severe a censure. There are some for whose salvation you are laboring. But is this number as comprehensive as it ought to be? You seek

the conversion of your children, but perhaps not that of your domestics; of your domestics, but perhaps not of your laborers; of your relatives at home, but perhaps not of your relatives abroad; of your family, but perhaps not of your friends; of your friends, but perhaps not of your neighbors. You try to convert a brother or a sister, but perhaps not a parent; a fellow servant, but not a master or a mistress; an equal, but not a superior. Yet, why should it be so? In all these directions you are both fitted and intended to exert the characteristic influence of piety. O salt of the earth! if it be thus with you, in a great degree you have lost your savor.

It is yet further to be examined, whether, if your efforts are directed to all the proper objects of them, they are employed with a due fervency. Of the opportunities which present themselves, you improve some; how many do you neglect? Would not many more occur to you, if you were closely on the watch for them? Might not more good be generally done, if you were prompt in beginning your work and diligent in pursuing it? Might not more seriousness and affection be thrown into your efforts? Are your endeavors of this kind anything like the great business of life? Or does it seem with you rather like a subordinate concern; a useful thing, if you have time and inclination for it; something which

may fill up the crevices of the day, if the world leaves any empty; and occupy just the fragments of time and the remnants of exhausted strength, while life's great end is business or labor, pleasure or ambition? O salt of the earth! if it be thus with you, to an extent much to be deplored you have lost your savor.

I know not that any Christian can hold himself clear from this charge. In truth he that feels most and does most for the salvation of men, is the likeliest to acknowledge that he both does and feels much less than he ought. Was the warmest zeal which ever glowed in the heart of man adequate to the claims of an object which has engaged the whole ardor of the Almighty? And what can he feel whose whole soul is devoted to it, but that even such a consecration is far below the glory of the end?

What would our feelings be if we were on our death bed, just entering into a dread eternity? What, if we were standing at the judgment seat of Christ? What, above all, if we were actually beholding the dismay of the guilty there, and the awful terrors amidst which the wicked will be driven into hell, even all those who forget God? Ah! would not our emotions at such a sight be of an overwhelming power, and smite us with astonishment and shame that they should ever have been so slender? Yet we should see nothing

then but the truth, and feel nothing but what the truth demands. And if our hearts were more deeply moved, our exertions would be proportionately augmented. What eager vigilance would be employed to watch for occasions of usefulness; nay, what holy ingenuity in creating them! what precious portions of time would be rescued from trifles; or what golden hours obtained by a wise arrangement of our affairs! How gladly would the period of sleep be curtailed in the morning, and that of relaxation in the evening hours! What a vein of piety would run through the mass of our ordinary intercourse, adapted to enrich even a passing stranger with inestimable treasure! O salt of the earth! if it be not thus with us, in an afflictive measure we have all lost our savor.

2. With a conviction, then, of our personal share in the state described, let us go on to consider the representation here given of its evil. "*If the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men.*"

1. We are thus led to observe, in the first place, that, when the disciples of Christ are not in vigorous action for the salvation of sinners, it frustrates an important part of the design of their conversion.

The chief end of God in conversion is the glory of his holy name, through Jesus Christ: but

there are also to be answered subordinate ends, in the attainment of which, in truth, the accomplishment of the primary object is involved. The first of these is the eternal blessedness of the sinner himself; the next is his utility as an instrument of converting others. Redeemed sinners are the very agents, and the only agents, which the Almighty forms for the conversion of the world. He lights the candle that it may shed light around. He has seasoned us with grace that we may season the earth. Let it be set down by us, therefore, as a certain and weighty truth, that our usefulness in the salvation of others was the second, and but the second great end he contemplated in our own. It is one of the grand methods by which he has designed us to show forth his praise.

Now nothing can be more binding, and nothing ought to be more delightful, than to fall in with God's designs respecting us, and to fulfil the good pleasure of his will. The force of all the mercy, the rich and unspeakable mercy, which he has shown us, leads us in this direction; according to the language of the apostle, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye yield yourselves a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which is your reasonable service."* "For ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price:

* Rom. xii. 1.

wherefore, glorify God with your bodies and your spirits, which are God's."* In agreement with this exhortation are the aspirations of every renewed heart; with Saul ready to ask, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do;"† and with him ready to reply, "The love of Christ constraineth me; because I thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that those who live should henceforth not live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again."‡ And such have been the vows, if they have been anything better than hypocrisy, which we have often presented to our adorable Redeemer at his throne, and at his table.

Can we then bear to think that there is any part of his will concerning us which we do not fulfil; that in any line of activity he has marked out for us, we are sluggish and ineffective? Is this our fidelity to the vows we have so frequently implored him to accept? Is this our evidence of grace? Is this our kindness to our friend, and the return we are content to make him for his love? Forbid it, all that is influential in gratitude, or faithful in friendship, or sincere in piety!

But if there be force in such a reflection in reference to any part of God's will, how much more when it applies to a particular of preeminent

* 1 Cor. vi. 20. † Acts ix. 6. ‡ 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

magnitude! Our activity for the conversion of others is no trivial thing with him. Next to our own salvation, it is the chief end for which he has called us by his grace; and it is the grand use to which he has intended to put us in the world. It is an object of the utmost importance in his view, and of the highest glory to his name; an object on which he has concentrated all the counsels of eternity, on which he has expended the amplest resources of his nature, for which he has poured forth the blood of his Son, and to which he is bending the whole administration of his providence. And is it to his purpose in such a point as this that we can be indifferent? Is it here that we fail to sympathize with him, or are slow in coming forth to his help? Is it to the losing of our savor that we can by any possibility be reconciled, and to an entire unaptness for the intended and blessed process of seasoning with grace a corrupted world? Alas! if it be so, our hearts are not right with God; and whatever portion of such a spirit there may be in us, it ought to be matter of deep humiliation before him.

2. A state of inactivity in reference to the conversion of sinners greatly diminishes the value of religious profession, and of religion itself as exhibited among men. It has always been the boast and glory of religion, that it has a tendency

to spread itself abroad. Hence our blessed Lord compared it to a grain of mustard seed, which, though the least of all seeds, became a tree; and to leaven, which, though a little of it were hid in three measures of meal, would extend its influence till the whole was leavened. The same idea is conveyed when he describes his disciples as *light*, and as *salt;* since both these substances are remarkably characterized by a diffusive quality. So eminently has religion borne this character, that it could never have been considered as exaggeration to say, Convert but one man, and you make provision for the conversion of the world. Upon this principle God himself has acted. The conversion of the world is an object which he actually contemplates; but what has he done for it? He has converted some men, and left them to be the conversion of others. When this work was to make the most rapid and triumphant progress, namely, after the resurrection of our Lord, the body of converts who were, like the little leaven, to begin it, was extremely small, the number of the names together being but a hundred and twenty; yet such was his reliance upon the diffusive power of religion, that he did not scruple to leave it in their hands. To the same instrumentality he continues to look. Lamentably small as the effect has often been, he still confides in the principle. Of his disciples he has all

along said, and he still says, "Ye are the salt of the earth;" and from their exertion, if from any quarter, are we still to anticipate the final triumphs of the gospel.

This, I have said, is the boast and glory of religion, that it is endowed with a vital power, and is adapted to diffuse itself even through a world as corrupt and hostile as this. But, alas! how much is this glory concealed, and this boast invalidated, when professors are slothful! If a man's religion were what it ought to be, there would not long be one convert in a place, without his being the means of converting others; but now, in how many places may we see not only one, but several Christians, with no increase of their number, with no change in the general character of their neighborhood, but rather with a dwindling of the light which has been kindled in them, and an approach to final extinction. Judging from the nature of religion, one would affirm, that if we could place twenty pious people in a town of moderate size, we should make an ample provision for its illumination; yet how often may we see that, in places where there is a much larger number, the cause of Christ seems stationary, if not declining. Might we not be certain that one conversion in a family would lead to more? Yet in how many instances, where several members of a household are pious, how little of its effect is felt by the remainder! Ah, re-

ligion! is this thy boasted efficacy? Are these the records of thy glory? Is this the heavenly remedy, the power of which was to exceed the virulence of the plague of sin, and to follow it in its universal desolation? What must the quality of that piety be, of which there can be so much in this kingdom, in this town, and in our family circles, with so small an influence?

Beloved brethren, if we have any anxiety to free religion from so unjust and unmerited a reproach, if we have any concern even about the sincerity of our own profession, let us be awake to these things. If religion really were not diffusive, it would deserve much less respect from men, and would be held in far lower estimation by God, than it has hitherto enjoyed on the one hand, and claimed on the other. *Salt which has lost its savor is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men:* and religious professors who do not strive to convert the ungodly, are worth lamentably little now, and run a fearful hazard of final rejection.

3. Negligence of the salvation of others is an unaccountable abandonment of our privilege. The honor and the delight associated with saving a soul from death, surely make a very intelligible and powerful appeal to the heart; and it might well have been supposed that, in pursuit of such an object, and in the communication

of such benefits, we should have gone forth with joyful zeal. Were any one to authorize us to enter into a scene of distress, where, for example, the hungry and the naked, the oppressed and the captive, the sick and the dying, were to be found, to announce a relief for every want, and to carry comfort to every mourner, should we not rejoice to execute the commission? And yet, when God makes us his almoners, and instrumental dispensers of his bounty, we are comparatively sluggish, if not almost unmoved! To which of the condemned sinners around us may we not proclaim a free forgiveness? Which of the hungry poor may we not assure of a welcome to the gospel feast? To which of the miserable may we not exhibit the Saviour's fulness of grace? Which of the perishing may we not hope to snatch as a brand out of the fire? What, then, is the meaning of our slothfulness? Is it that such deeds as these yield us no joy? that we count our privilege a task? that we reckon the labor more than the reward? O hearts destitute alike of ambition and of pity! We confess, then, that we disown the luxury of doing good, and desert the station of benefactors of our kind. It is an honor and a joy, in which, though they are worthy of the highest, we have no pleasure. Wishing to increase our felicity, he has caused them to overflow from his

own bosom to ours; but we disrelish and repel them. And for what do we refuse them? Are there any pleasures holier, or more exalted? None. Is it to be more active in relieving temporal wretchedness? No. He that does most for men's souls, will always do most for their bodies. It is merely to sink down into selfishness and indolence; to give ourselves to the world, in its vanities or its cares; and to lead a life which is far more wearisome as it passes, and will be totally fruitless when it is gone.

Yet, no, Heavenly Father; we hope not. We have been too insensible to our privilege, but we trust we are not utterly callous to it. Arouse us to deeper feeling, and enable us to work with thee, with a heart like thine own!

4. Negligence of the work of conversion perpetuates the miserable and sinful state of the world. "If the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?" or, how shall it season that to which it is applied? And if the disciples of Christ do not lay themselves out for the conversion of the world, how will it be achieved?

If, in answer to this inquiry, it should be said that the purpose of God will stand, and that if he means to convert the world it will infallibly be done, it would be a truth, but a truth perverted to the purpose of a falsehood.

For, as certainly as God has designed the conversion of the world, has he designed also that it shall be achieved by the instrumentality of his people; their agency, therefore, though truly subordinate, is not less necessary than the influence of the Spirit itself. If the world cannot be converted without the one, so neither without the other; just in the same manner that, while God has declared harvest shall not cease, there will be no harvest so long as the world stands, if the seed is not sown. As to neglect sowing the seed would destroy the possibility of the harvest, so to withhold christian exertion prevents the conversion of the world. In whatever sense it is God's work, his fixed arrangements are such that he not merely will not, he cannot perform it while his people are inactive. It is by their hands the bible must be circulated; it is by their lips the gospel must be preached. Their indolence restrains his action. And whenever the time may come that he shall arouse himself, and endure this sluggishness no longer, his first effort towards the conversion of the world will be to smite the obdurate hearts of his saints to tears of penitence and tenderness, and to send them forth weeping, bearing at length the precious seed from whence the harvest of immortal joy shall arise.

It may perhaps be conceived, that the instru-

mentality to be employed in the progress of religion is to be chiefly that of ministers and missionaries. Without having any wish to depreciate the office of the ministry, or to diminish its responsibility, I must be allowed to say, that I think the sentiment is carried much too far. In the means to be used for the universal prevalence of religion, there is much that ministers, with whatever zeal, cannot do—it must be done by private Christians, if done at all; and there is much more which they can do far better than ministers. Besides, would Christ have fitted so many thousands and hundreds of thousands of persons for usefulness in saving sinners, without intending to bring them into action, and into a measure of action proportionate to their value? Does he mean that his wide triumphs should be won by the comparatively small number of his people technically known as ministers? The idea is absurd; and it is falsified by fact. Inquire where it is that the spread of religion partakes most largely of the character of apostolic or millennial days; and you will have for answer, It is in the West Indies, and the islands of the Pacific Ocean; where indeed they have zealous ministers, but where, too, they have zealous converts. It is in the West Indies, where a single negro, in defiance of his master's wrath (no trifle in a land of slavery,) induces four hundred of his companions to hear

the gospel, and has the pleasure of soon seeing forty of them join the church. It is in the isles of the Southern sea, where men are scarcely converted, before they take a boat to a distant isle, and live for nothing, but to save their brethren. This is the spirit we want at home: when shall it once be?

I confess myself to have a strong conviction, that this is the kind of exertion by which the universal prevalence of christianity will be achieved; that the present stagnation is to be ascribed to the absence of it; and that the final triumphs wait only for its developement. Let the church be converted, and the world will soon be so too. Something, it is true, I admit even that much has been done, and is doing for the maintenance and extension of an official ministry; but, in comparison with the number and capability of religious professors, very little is done in the way of personal and individual endeavor. This is infinitely the most valuable of all the aids which can be rendered to the cause of Christ, and would do more good than all the wealth of the christian or the antichristian world. While this is withheld, there is little reason to hope for a blessing on pecuniary contributions, or even to expect that they will long continue to be supplied. The liberality of the present age is eminently the creature of excitement. In order to awaken it, and raise it to

its present pitch, recourse has been had to a system of stimulants, in some cases of a very equivocal character, and in many wholly incapable of being perpetuated. Every such effort requires a more pungent excitement than the last; and while the ingenuity required in the invention of them is already almost expended, the result of the system, when it ceases, must be a proportionate languor and exhaustion. No pecuniary aids can be permanent, but such as are derived with greater ease, but such as arise from the deep emotions of the heart in its intercourse with God, and from a combined sense of duty and of privilege. These springs it may be feared, afford but a small proportion of the existing liberality of the public; nor can they be opened by any cause but one which will equally induce a habit of individual exertion. Let a man once feel it to be his duty and delight to make the great end of his life, next to his own salvation, the conversion of all around him, and he will then know, unbidden, what to do with his money, as well as with his influence and his time.

The influence which the method of universal and individual exertion would have in feeding the oft exhausted and lamenting funds of public societies, is among the least of its benefits. It would be an attitude of consistency and faithfulness upon which the blessing of God might be

expected to rest; it would multiply laborers beyond example, and beyond computation; it would place them in circumstances inexpressibly eligible for easy and effectual action; and it would cause the power of religion to penetrate the dense mass of society in every direction. It would create the most powerful operation, too, where it has the greatest prospect of success, and where success would be productive of the most beneficial results; for its first achievement would be the conversion of our country; and there is no country with equal capacity for accomplishing the conversion of the world.

But great results cannot arise without the zealous exertion we have enforced. If the salt have lost its savor, the mass cannot be seasoned; and if the followers of Christ, who, collectively and individually, are the salt of the earth, do not labor for the conversion of the world, it will never be achieved. Let but the people of God be inactive, and mankind will still remain in the depraved, the guilty, and the miserable condition which we profess to deplore, and for their deliverance from which we have presented ourselves at the throne of almighty mercy.

What an affecting consideration is this! It is not merely that the prevalence of sin and misery around us will be perpetuated, but that it will be perpetuated by ourselves. We are the destin-

ed instruments for its removal, and we become answerable for its continuance. Ask why, at this late period of the christian dispensation, the world still lies in wickedness: is it not because the followers of Christ have been indolent and unfaithful? Ask why, after so long a possession of evangelical privilege our favored country is in so large a measure benighted and irreligious: is it not because Christians have been negligent and slothful? Ask why a town, with a large leaven of piety for many years, is characterized by melancholy remnants of ungodliness: is it not because the salt has lost its savor? Or ask, finally, why our domestic and social circles are so ineffectually pervaded by the power of religion: is it not because we ourselves have been wanting in the efforts required at our hands? Alas, for us, who have so many sins of our own, that we should become chargeable with the sins of others! Alas! that we, who profess to grieve over the wickedness of the world, should become accessary to its continuance! O to wash our hands of this dreadful stain! at least to reprove the works of darkness, and to shine as lights in such a world, holding forth the word of life, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear, that their blood may not be required at our hands!

Beloved brethren, I have not set these considerations before you for the mere purpose of exciting your feelings, but I have wished by them to lead you to the contemplation of a material change in the character of your lives; and I implore you to consider whether it exceeds your duty, or will be contrary to your happiness. Our attention has been pointedly called to the stationary aspect of religion at the present period, and we have united in solemn and fervent prayer for a revival: but what revival can we expect, if we do not labor as well as pray? There is assuredly much room for enlargement in both; and as we have begun with prayer, let us follow it up with practice. Let it be fixed in your hearts, that it is for *you, each and every one of you*, young or old, rich or poor, wise or unwise, male or female, to try to convert whatever sinners you may consistently address, with all the vigor you would bestow upon a chief end of life. You who are parents with your children, masters with your servants, tradesmen with your workmen, relations with your relations, and all with your friends, companions, and neighbors, see that you try at all times to save these persons, with more earnestness than you show in conducting your worldly business, or in laboring for your daily bread. Nothing will make you so happy; nothing short of it will fulfil your

duty; nothing less will accelerate the triumphs of the gospel.

I am not unacquainted with the impediments you will find in the attempt. That which is new always seems to be difficult. You may feel a degree of unaptness in your early efforts, under the influence of which you may imagine that you cannot proceed; or you may perceive your endeavors to fall so far short of what the object demands, that you may be almost constrained to relinquish them as unsuitable. But I can foretel what will embarrass and obstruct you much more. It is a cold and unfeeling heart. Cold and unfeeling, I mean, not in the abstract; for, if you are a Christian, you do feel something for perishing sinners; but in comparison with what you ought to feel. What moment will you find, even in your most sacred hours, and when your spirit is most solemnly impressed with eternal things, in which your pity for dying souls is adequate to their misery, and your resolution to labor for their rescue equal to their woes? But how often will you feel far less warmly than this! Even by the time you reach the family altar the fire in your bosom will glow more feebly, so that the tone of your instructions there will be too low; and when you have been a few hours in the world, when the cares of business have begun to occupy you, or common pursuits to engage your attention, how little will you feel then for the ir-

religious around you! Should an opportunity of usefulnes then occur, how easily may it be overlooked, how negligently passed by! Or how nearly may it become the sentiment of that moment, "I must mind my business, and cannot attend to the salvation of souls!" Ah! brethren, believe me, this will be the grand obstacle to your activity and success. Apply the remedy, therefore, to the root of the evil. Do not enter upon labor, nor even resolve upon it, till your hearts are deeply moved with pity and with love. Let your first step be a visit, and an oft repeated visit, to the throne of grace, to implore the enlightening and melting influences of the Holy Spirit. Labor first of all to have your heart duly affected with the evil of your own sins, the hateful corruption of your own nature, and the awful perils from which your own soul has been redeemed. Endeavor next to realize the fact that many of your children, relatives, and friends, are in a similar condition; and contemplate them in it, as though you actually saw them in the presence of God, or before his judgment seat, and sinking into endless perdition. Give him no rest until he makes your heart melt at the sight with the tenderest pity; till he makes you feel that it is your privilege and your obligation to save them, and that all the duties and pleasures of life vanish in comparison with the effort. Then you will be

fit to labor; and then I may confidently predict that you *will* labor O! you will make no excuses then; you will let slip no opportunities; you will hesitate at no sacrifices.

Such a state of mind, perhaps, is far above what you now feel, and in seeking a higher elevation you may find much discouragement, or you may seem to make only larger and more melancholy discoveries of the hardness of your heart. Yet do not despair. A habit is not often changed in a moment; but it may be changed, and it will be changed by degrees. Think of the importance and excellency of such an alteration; and wait upon the Lord for it with Jacob's importunity, when he said, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me."

Having attained a measure of a tender spirit, before you commence your exertions, take a deliberate view of the field of your labor, and familiarize yourself with the persons, circumstances, and character of those whose welfare you are seeking. Assemble round you in imagination your family group, husband or wife, children or domestics; then your laborers, acquaintance, and neighbors. Endeavor to mark those in whom no signs of grace appear; and then concentrate upon them the general compassion you already feel for impenitent sinners. A soul ready to perish is an object touching to you in

the abstract; let it now be embodied in the persons of this group in thought before you. Say, This my husband, or this my wife, is a stranger to the Saviour, and in danger of eternal ruin; this my child, these my children, are the children of wrath, and growing up as enemies to God; these my servants are doing the service of sin, the wages of which is death; these my friends and neighbors are in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity, and the wrath of God abideth on them. Dwell upon this fact, till it becomes in your eyes infinitely the most important feature in their condition, far outweighing all varieties of character, and circumstances of temporal good or evil; and then think how much *you* may do for their salvation. Think that every necessary means to convert them is in your hand; that you possess even a divine adaptation to effect it; that God has redeemed you for the very purpose of making you instrumental in converting others; and that you can scarcely fail to labor with success. Next arrange your methods of operation. Think how each may be best approached, and adapt your efforts to the varied character and circumstances with deliberation and design. Watch for opportunities, and embrace promptly all which occur to you. Labor for their souls, in a word, as though their salvation were, what it ought to be, superior to

all objects for which you live, next to the welfare of your own.

Such being your spirit and your purpose when you enter upon the duties of the day, recall yourself often to the remembrance of it during its progress. Ask yourself at various moments, Am I now cherishing my highest aim? and striving to be useful to those who are in my company? Especially when an opportunity of usefulness appears, remember how important the improvement of it is; that it affords you an answer to prayer, and that it enables you to exert yourself for an object which an angel would rejoice to promote, and for which your Saviour died: and with these recollections lift up your heart to God, that he may quicken you for the effort, and crown it with success.

Next to attaining a tenderness of spirit, nothing is more important or more difficult than preserving it. How soon does it decline, even in circumstances most favorable to its continuance; but amidst the concerns of the world it inevitably sinks. The vagrant heart must be kept in check by constant access to the throne of grace, and by close walking with God. The measure in which our concern for sinners has declined should be a subject of daily examination, and its revival and increase a matter of importunate prayer. Most especially let us be con-

cerned and resolved to leave our closet no morning, until our minds are deeply imbued with compassion for sinners, solemnly impressed with our responsibility for the state of those in immediate contact with ourselves, and fully devoted to their spiritual benefit as the highest object of the day. Such a course will not be maintained in vain. Religion never declines with us while we are truly unwilling it should do so. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount on wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."*

To this watchfulness over our spirit, it will be highly important to add a daily examination of our conduct, the true character of which will not be known to us without an attentive review. Let it be the serious business of our evening retirement, to inquire, Whom have I attempted to convert to-day? When my eye was resting on my children or servants, my neighbors or friends, who know not God, did a sense of their guilt and misery move me? And to what did it move me? Did I warn and reprove; did I invite and allure them? Did I speak of the Saviour, or commend his ways? Did I say or do anything to infuse into their minds a solemn regard to eternity? Have I done this whenever I

*Isa. xl. 31.

ought to have done it this day; towards every person; on every occasion; and with a due solemnity? Ah, brethren, while a professor who never looks closely into his conduct may retain a persuasion that he is nearly or quite without blame on this head, it is impossible but such a scrutiny should convict every one of us of daily sin, and yield us cause for fresh humiliation, and stimulus to more devoted fidelity.

O that the Lord may grant you, beloved brethren, a large measure of a tender spirit! O that your awakening energy may show itself in new and vigorous exertion! Which of you intends to be the cold, the sluggish disciple; the salt which has lost its savor? I will hope and believe that, with one heart and voice, you would answer, NONE. "Wherefore be ye steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

And now "let thy work appear unto thy servants, O Lord, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it!"*

I cannot close this discourse without addressing myself for a moment to those who know not

*Ps. xc. 16, 17.

God. Some who are now present do not profess to be disciples of Christ, or conceive yourselves to be so. You have heard me urging upon the pious friends around you the importance of attempting the conversion of sinners; that is, of attempting *your* conversion. Perhaps the discourse in this respect may have struck you with some surprise. You were not aware that we considered your salvation as of so much moment; none of us have spoken to you concerning it in a manner adapted to convey to you such an idea. We justly bring this reproof upon ourselves. What can be more cutting than the rebuke you thus administer? Forgive us this wrong! But do not suffer our neglect to induce an opinion that your salvation is a trifle. O no! it is of infinite moment. If our conduct has not conveyed this impression to you, yet derive it from the astonishing, and still only proportionate attention which has been paid to it by the Almighty. It engaged his eternal counsels; nay, it induced the gift, and cost the blood of his Son. And, blessed be his name, it is a benefit which he is infinitely willing to bestow. His mercy is without limitation, and without reluctance. His language is, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth.†

* Matt. xi. 28. † Isa. xlv. 22.

For him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."* Can you turn a deaf ear to an invitation so delightful? Or if the tones of a mortal voice may add to the eloquence of heaven, permit us to enforce this call with whatever of affectionate concern our cold hearts may feel; and to implore you by the loathsomeness of your corruption, by the magnitude of your guilt, and by your peril of eternal ruin; by the joys of heaven, and by the pains of hell; by the anguish of a dying and the entreaties of a living Saviour; by the mercies of a long-suffering God, and the terrors of an avenging Judge; that you receive not the grace of God in vain. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation.† To day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.‡ But take with you words, and turn unto the Lord, and say unto him, Put away all iniquity, receive us graciously, and love us freely."§ Amen.

*John vi. 37. †2 Cor. vi. 2. ‡Heb. iv. 7.
§Hosea xiv. 2.

BOOKS PUBLISHED BY

LINCOLN & EDMANDS.

PALEY'S THEOLOGY, illustrated by the Plates, and by a selection from the Notes of Dr. Paxton, with additional Notes, Original and Selected, for this edition, with a Vocabulary of Scientific Terms. $16 per doz.

☞This masterly work so completely establishes the existence and perfections of Jehovah from his works, that it should be universally placed in the hands of youth, to establish their minds on great first principles. The plates are beautifully executed on copper.

NOTICES OF THIS EDITION.

Extract from the Christian Spectator.

'This work in its present form, is farther recommended to general use, by the correctness of its execution, and by the moderate price at which it is sold, considering the number and value of the plates. Paley's Theology will hereafter be read with an interest scarcely less intense, and far more beneficial, than that which belongs to the best works of fiction. It should be found in every Sabbath School library, and have a place among every well educated youth.'

Extract from the Christian Examiner.

Perhaps no one of our author's works gives greater satisfaction to all classes of readers, the young, the old, the ignorant, and the enlightened, than the Natural Theology. Indeed we recollect no book in which the arguments for the existence and attributes of a Supreme Being to be drawn from his works, are exhibited in a manner more attractive or more convincing. The Vocabulary of scientific terms appended to the volume

by the editor, will be found very convenient to most readers; and the few notes which he has given, are so appropriate, judicious, and well written, that we regret that he has not favored us with more. The plates no doubt add to the interest of the work, even where the argument was sufficiently intelligible without them, and serve to impress on the memory the statements they are intended to illustrate. The cheapness of the present volume, which, in addition to more than 300 duodecimo pages of compact printing, contains 39 plates, shows the advantages which science may hope to derive from the invention of lithography. *

'The object of the publishers of the present edition, is to give the work 'a more extended circulation in our Colleges and High Schools.' We trust they will succeed in their design. The Natural Theology is an admirable manual for students. Though [it] may be read at any period of life with profit and delight, it is particularly adapted to that season when the character is forming. It may serve to relieve the doubts of the existence of a superintending Providence, which at that age sometimes obtrude upon the mind, and to infuse in their place a rational and well grounded piety."

THE BIBLICAL READER, consisting of Selections from the Sacred Scriptures, with Questions and Reflections for the use of Schools. By Rev. J. L. Blake, Rector of St. Matthew's Church, and Principal of a Female Academy, Boston. $10 doz.

☞This work has been highly recommended by many of our periodicals, and is well adapted for the purpose for which it was designed. The difficulty of reading the Scriptures in classes, has been the reason of discontinuing this exercise in many of our schools. This selection removes the difficulty, while it preserves a correct chain of the whole inspired volume. To each chapter is added a concise note, extracted from approved commentaries on the Bible. It is adorned with thirty-two handsome cuts from the best designs. Those who wish to continue the reading of the Bible in their seminaries, and thus early impress upon the tender mind its divine principles, will find this volume peculiarly adapted to this high purpose.

* The work is now sold at the same price, with *copperplates*.

MEMOIRS OF HOWARD, the Philanthropist. Price 75 cents.

From the New England Christian Herald.

The character of this great philanthropist cannot be contemplated but with feelings of the deepest respect and admiration. His philanthrophy and charity were unbounded, and of the most exalted and beautiful character. . . . . For the sole purpose of relieving the distresses of the most wretched of the human race, he spent sixteen or seventeen years of his life, at an expense to himself of thirty thousand pounds, (more than one hundred and thirty-three thousand dollars!!) and travelled between fifty and sixty thousand miles.

We advise our readers who can afford it, to purchase the book; and may a perusal of it enkindle in their bosoms that heaven-born principle that burned so brilliantly in his.

POCKET EDITION OF MRS. JUDSON'S MEMOIR.

Just published, by Lincoln & Edmands, the Memoir of Mrs. Judson, *complete in a beautiful pocket form.* With a new copperplate engraving of Mrs Judson, and a map of Burmah.

This facinating and highly useful work has rapidly passed through various editions on both sides of the Atlantic, and its happy effects are apparent in an increased interest in favor of Missions among the different denominations of Christians. All persons who are desirous of extending the blessings of the gospel to the heathen will successfully promote their wish, by extending the circulation of this most remarkable Memoir. To accomplish this object, the present neat and cheap stereotype edition has been issued. It continues the History of the Mission to the latest date.

☞Price of the pocket edition, 75 cents, single—$7,50 per dozen, with additional deduction by the hundred.

SABBATH SCHOOL CLASS BOOK. Just published, by Lincoln & Edmands, the Sabbath School Class Book, comprising copious exercises on the Sacred Scriptures. By E. Lincoln. pp. 104. Beautifully half bound. $1,50 per doz.

☞This Class Book presents a concise and connected view of the Old Testament History, of the Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles, together with a doctrinal and practical catechism, *by references to the Bible.* It is believed that a text book for general use, in Sabbath Schools, should furnish facilities for use without requiring extensive research in the teachers, as the great proportion of persons who cheerfully render their valuable services in this department of christian benevolence, cannot be expected to be able to command the time required to determine intricate subjects. Those questions, therefore, in this Class Book, which do not refer to the Scriptures, are referred to Malcom's Bible Dictionary.

**For sale by S. Colman, Portland; A. S. Beckwith, Providence; Packard & Butler, Hartford; J. Van Valkenburgh, and Elam Bliss, New York; at the Baptist General Tract Depository, Philadelphia; and by Wm. Riley, Charleston, S. C.

MEMOIR OF ANDREW FULLER, by J. W. Morris, being a deeply interesting account of this most remarkable minister of Christ.

CHRISTIAN POCKET LIBRARY. Lincoln & Edmands are publishing neat and cheap editions of a number of practical theological works, with elegant frontispieces, to be sold separately, and also in sets, entitled THE CHRISTIAN LIBRARY. The following are already published.

1. BAXTER'S CALL. A new and beautiful stereotype edition of Baxter's Call, with Chalmer's Introductory Essay, and several Minor Works of Mr. Baxter, 18mo. with an elegant frontispiece—4 dolls. a dozen, in boards—6 dolls. bound, gilt.

2. BAXTER'S SAINT'S REST. Rev. Mr. MALCOM, of Boston, says to the Publishers:—

'I sincerely wish, that a work so excellent in itself, and which has received the seal of God's blessing, not only in the instruction and comfort of saints, but in the conversion, by its instrumentality. of hundreds of souls, may now receive a very extended circulation.'

Rev. Dr. Wayland, President of Brown University, says:

'I am gratified to perceive that you have published a handsome edition of Baxter's Saint's Rest. Of the value of the work itself it is superfluous to speak. It has few equals in any language. The ordinary copies are most palpably beneath the value of the work.

3. THE IMITATION OF CHRIST. By Thomas à Kempis, with Dr. Chalmer's Introductory Essay. A new edition, edited by Rev. Howard Malcom.

4. JAY'S LECTURES. In 1 vol. 18mo.

5. THE CHURCH MEMBER'S GUIDE. By Rev. J. A. James, Birmingham, adapted to the American Churches, by Rev. J. O. Choules.

☞A universal expression of approbation has been given to this useful manual, as it brings home to the bosoms and feelings of Christians, of all ages and stations, the interesting duties which their several situations require; and a careful perusal of its pages can hardly fail to render every individual more active, more circumspect and more useful.

6. TRAVELS OF TRUE GODLINESS. By Benjamin Keach. Revised and improved. With a Memoir of his Life. By Howard Malcom, Pastor of Federal-St. Baptist Church, Boston.